II Shri Hari II

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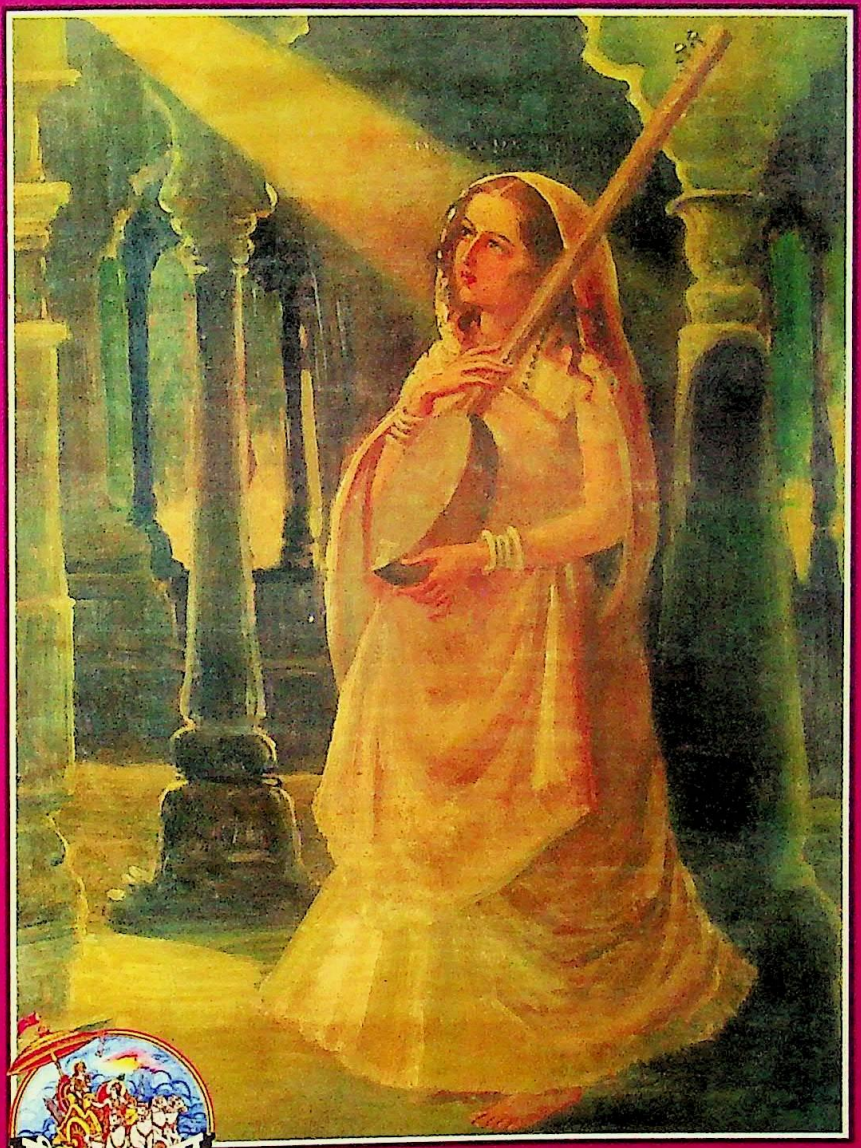
The Story of Mīrā Bāī



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II Śrī Hariḥ II

The Story of Mīrā Bāī

tvameva	mātā	ca	pitā	tvameva
tvameva	bandhuśca	sakhā	tvameva
tvameva	vidyā	draviṇaṁ	tvameva
tvameva	sarvaṁ	mama	devadeva

त्वमेव	माता	च	पिता	त्वमेव
त्वमेव	बन्धुश्च	सखा	त्वमेव।
त्वमेव	विद्या	द्रविणं	त्वमेव
त्वमेव	सर्वं	मम	देवदेव॥

by : Bankey Behari

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Introduction

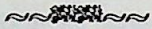
Buchun asked me to write the story of Mīrā. I place it before the reader.

I do not claim for it a place as history, I delight to call it a story. Based on tradition, Macaulife and Todd have done valuable work on the subject. Our contemporaries have carried out researches on Mīrā, and are alleged to have exploded many established traditions assigned to her, especially the one which ascribes the maltreatment of Mīrā Bāī by her husband. The fact is, the persecutions began after the death of her husband, who was all love to her, and were met at the hands of the husband's brother at the instigation of his sister Ūdābāī. With profit, readers interested in the subject might refer to either class of writings.

To me Mīrā is the moth that burnt itself in the candle of love for Giradhara and for all times filled the Temple of Devotion with fragrance. Undaunted by fire or frown, unperturbed by persecutions, this devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa sang her songs of princely renunciation and self-surrender, that shall infuse courage in the aspirant on the Path of Love. Mīrā lived the message she preached, scoffed at cold intellectualism and boldly

proclaimed the doctrine of absolute faith in, and devotion to the Lord.

Modern Science and Art might well mock at her poetic outbursts and call those emotional effusions as mere paroxyms of a maniac or the after-effects of an "overheated" brain; I, however, maintain that these charges are untenable. I hold it honestly and express it emphatically that the Path to Salvation lies through love and devotion, which transcend reason and intellect. Let them, who will, try it—Mīrā has given the lead and with a smile softly playing on her lips she beckons to us—let them who will follow.



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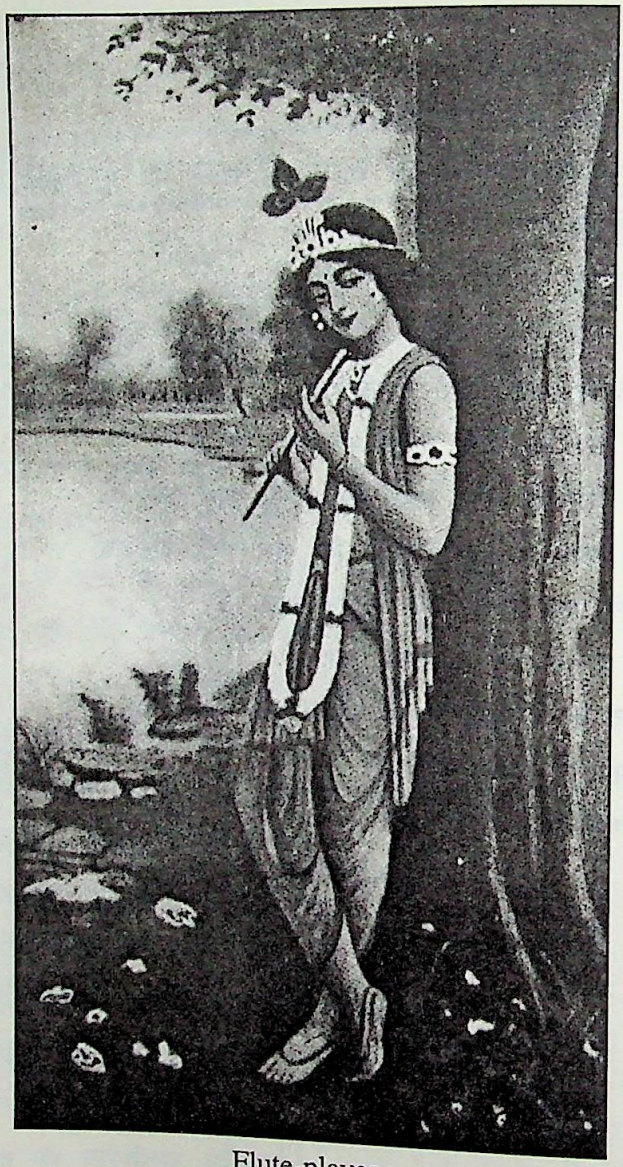

Flute-player

॥ Śrī Hariḥ ॥

CHAPTER I

THE DEVOTEES OF THE LORD

Look at those eyes, those beautiful little orbs that seem to reflect the whole universe and point to the Unknown. The gospel of Love and Truth that they are preaching, the religion of tears that they are proclaiming, the joy of holiness that they are showering, all shed a glow at once resplendent and captivating. Their language is so mute, yet so expressive; they have no tongue, yet speak so vividly of the mighty experiences of the days of separation and recite the tale of pathos, of parting and of meeting, with a clarity that transcends the attempts of the artist's brush. On canvas I have witnessed many sights, but seldom has it been rendered so living as when I saw tears of gratitude in the penitent's eye as he sat bathing under the showers of the Master's grace, or the pearly drops in the eyes of the devotee as he sat in meditation. Few realize, much less experience, the joys that fall to the lot of the Blessed. These are the children of God, nurtured on the bed of sorrow, on whose head was showered the ridicule of the world, whose food has been the crushings of their heart and whose drink has been the pangs of affliction. Some born in the manger*,

---

* Lord Christ.

others discovered forlorn by the tank*, and yet others forsaken to the fire and the winds, these are the heralds that announce the approach of a higher power that points to the great IDEAL. Their joy is in the distant meeting and their satisfaction lies in the gleaming hope that sheds lustre in the distance and whose prize is the CROWN OF ETERNAL BLISS. Such are the devotees of the Lord.

I lay in the lap of my mother, hearing the tale of one such child of the Lord, when the motherly caresses lulled me to sleep and lo! in my dreams whom else should I meet but child of my fancy and I cried out....

"These tear-bedimmed eyes, these dishevelled hair, this fragile constitution, wrapped in the divine ochre, is this the child of love whose tale you were just reciting to me, mother? In the lanes of Brindaban how like a maniac this beautiful devotee sometimes rushes sideways, sometimes dances in ecstasy as she wildly goes to meet the Idol of her adoration with open arms! The only words that come out of those beautiful thin lips and charm the passer-by are 'Govinda, Govinda, Govinda.' Sweet is their melody and rhythmic is their metre. They seem to mock at the technical rules of prosody. So comprehensive in their significance are these words as they come out of the lips of a devotee that one stares in awe at their sanctity and marvels at their meaning. They seem to lay bare to the dreamer

* Saint Kabīra.

the pathos of ages, and teach him the lesson of the highest form of love that merges the finite in the Infinite and ushers him into the mysteries of the Unexplored Region. However mystic the words, our holy mother was in her homely way, teaching the greatest lessons in the simplest language, and that language none else but the language of love and that expression no other than that of emotion. And, as she passed along the street, some bowed in reverence and a few mocked her in the same old way that greeted the great benefactor of the world by the cross. But her thoughts were centred in some higher region, and little did she care to turn round and hear the applause and the sarcasms thus showered. But many a stranger, better disposed, inquired who that blessed lady was. And the old man standing at a distance with tears in his eyes said, my son, she is our blessed mother that has made the soil of this spot sacred, and has once more recalled the days of the Rāsalīlā of ages past and is enacting in our midst once again in all its genuineness and glory the drama of our Lord Kṛṣṇa. And as she dances in ecstasy, the Lord Himself appears and makes His presence felt by everybody seated close to the feet of the holy mother, as she sits wrapt in meditation. Once a princess, now a beggar in the lanes of love, various are her pet names; but to me the only name, with which the children of the cowherds accost her as they feed her with their cow's milk and ask her to sing to them the old forlorn songs of the Gopīs of Vraja, appeals the

most. While round the neck of the lovely docile figure they cling and call out to their comrades, ringing the air by their cries, come, friends, run, enjoy; for, once more has Mīrā come; and they rush and dance in the shades of the trees while Mīrā sings—

'Govinda, Govinda, Giradhara Govinda.' And, as she weeps and laughs, in her ecstasy, she swoons away to rest in the lap of her dear Lord. The children terrified begin to cry, and the Lord pitying them, rouses the fainted beauty again to pass her time among the innocent children. Thus pass the days of the holiest of the holy.

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD AND MARRIAGE

I got up from my reverie and, with tears in my eyes, entreated my mother once again to recite the tale of this saint and she began:—

Born in Saṁvat 1557 in far-off Marwar, in the village Kurkhi, this princess of Chitor, forsaking the pomp and glory of the palaces, started IN THE QUEST OF THE FLUTE-PLAYER barefooted, to tread the path that led to the Abode of Eternal Bliss. In the forehead of the little child shone the signs of future greatness, as she rose up startled by the sound of the marriage procession that passed below the palace of her father, Rao Ratan Singh, and peeping through the barred windows of the balcony and seeing the child-bridegroom dressed artistically, this baby of five cried out "Mother, and where is my bridegroom?" The mother smiled at the innocence of the child. She seemed to have read in her broad forehead the future greatness of her simple babe and replied (pointing to the little lovely idol of Lord Kṛṣṇa that stood in the temple and was so much loved by the child), "Giradhara Gopāla is thy bridegroom." Since then Gopāla became a subject of special fascination to her. All her discourses were about this beautiful image. All her time was spent in bathing and dressing it. She worshipped it. She slept with it on a deerskin. She danced about it. She sang

to it lovely songs. Its joys were her joys, and, when a slight ray of gloom was witnessed by her on its bright forehead, that would make her weep for hours, till she again saw a clear smile on the face that would captivate her heart. To everybody it became known that this mad girl seemed to read the expression of this idol, and to hold conversation with the seemingly mute Kṛṣṇa.

Thus passed some years in patiently wooing her Beloved. From her childhood, therefore, she could know of no other love but that for her dear Kṛṣṇa. This could not be tolerated by the conservative, custom-ridden family, which like others would permit no such display of fancy and would scoff at those paroxysms of devotion, and sneer at the flow of tears. In their eyes these visionary dreams had no place in the practical life of the household. They mocked at it, as they saw things from a different angle. They soon thought of a way to take the maniac out of her madness for the Lord and relieve her of the divine intoxication. Therefore messengers were despatched and great pains taken to find out a husband suitable for the princess. The fateful day arrived when her daily worship was disturbed by the music of the drum, by feastings, feedings, and a variety of ceremonies; for, this was the bridal procession that had arrived at Ratan Singh's palace. Mīrā was married to the heir of the mighty State of Chitor—the cynosure of all Rājapūta eyes and a terror to the conquering Moghuls. The husband was the valiant Bhojarāja, the eldest son of Rāṇā Sāṁgā, whose name

is writ large for all time to come in the annals of Rajasthan as the solitary figure that would own allegiance to nobody, but would rather experience all the hardships of life and would walk bare-footed on the burning sands of Rājapūtānā, with his hungry princes at his side and the midday sun overhead, and would patiently watch even the last particle of loaf, prepared from the bark of a tree, being snatched away from the hands of the famished children. But he would not budge an inch from the traditions of the Rājapūtas, who could never recognize Muslim suzerainty. It is these people that bore the banner of Rājapūta chivalry. It was this blood that ran in the veins of the family into which Mīrā Bāī was married. The son, Bhojarāja, the husband of this little saint, had inherited all the martial qualities of his ancestors. Any general would be proud of the physical appearance he bore, the valiant qualities he possessed. The blood of these Rājapūtas has been the pride of India. But martial qualities have no place in the sphere of love, where humility is the ideal, and the lowly alone can attain to the highest pedestal. Vanity has no place there and pride is an outcast. How could this marriage then prove to be a happy one! But blessed is Mīrā who left no stone unturned to please her husband and see that his mandates were obeyed. She tried to give him no occasion for offence. She stood out a sublime figure of a devoted wife, an ideal that could be the boast of any Hindu lady. But in her love for Lord Kṛṣṇa she could accept no compromise.

To her that was supreme over all duties—spiritual, moral or temporal. There she stood adamant in her virgin glory, guarding her rights with meticulous care. Beyond what was necessary, she recognized no vagaries in life. After finishing her household work, she would feel that all the time was the Lord's, and then she would go to her temple—where sat the joy of her heart, the little image of Lord Kṛṣṇa—and start in the company of one or two devotees the nightlong ecstatic dances before her Lord and sing songs to Him. In her ecstatic moments, witnessing this exuberance of the heart and complete effacement of the self, the Lord would Himself appear. The little lovely idol that sat mute would get up, clasp His devotee to the bosom, play the melodious tunes on the flute to her, and hold long discourses. This was Mīrā's joy. This was Mīrā's life. Mīrā was born for it. This was what Mīrā could not give up. But this frantic display of self-surrender and utter recklessness of form and formalities greatly irritated the mother-in-law and other ladies of her husband's family. The mother-in-law, after giving her the usual lectures on the code of married life, and telling her that the discharge of domestic duties alone could lead to domestic happiness as conceived by the worldly-minded, told the innocent bride to bow to the family idol of Durgā, the image of Gaurī, the goddess of Śakti. But the young consort was too imbued with love for her dear Kṛṣṇa to think of any other love. With tears in her eyes, in abject humility she fell at the feet of the lady and through sobs broke out—

"Mother, this head has already been dedicated to the lotus-feet of Śrī Giradhara Gopāla. Forgivé, mother, it can bow before no other god or goddess now. Mother, do not press me any more. Your threats and coaxings leave me unmoved." The mother found the daughter-in-law adamantine in her resolve. Though in her heart of hearts she blessed the girl for her pious determination and fearless love for the Lord, yet, to keep up appearances and follow the trodden track of social rules she admonished the bride. This had no salutary effect on Mīrā. Then came the turn of Ūdā, the sister of Bhojarāja, to come and plead with her sister-in-law to give up her obstinacy and yield. Yield—this is a horrible term to the devotees of the Lord. The strong reply that the little Mīrā gave to her sister's scurrilous and offensive remarks soon aroused the wrath of Ūdā. She and her companions started a regular conspiracy against her to take her to task for her obstinacy and began to defame her. They went to Bhojarāja and told him that his wife held discourses with her paramours at dead of night in the temple. That they had themselves witnessed this tete-a-tete going on every night. That the Prince could convince himself by watching it for himself. That it was a matter for shame for the family and brought a great slur upon the fair name of Chitor that the wife of the heir-apparent should carry on such liaisons. The anger of the Prince knew no bounds, blood rushed to his cheeks, and, with a sword in his hand, he hurried into the apartments of his newly

wedded wife to kill her and stop all these scandals. Mīrā fortunately was not in the room. The Prince was rushing like a maniac when some kinder soul came and pacified him, told him not to lose himself so soon, but should first satisfy himself of the truth of it, lest he may have cause to repent later on. He accepted the advice. He abandoned the idea for the time being and anxiously waited for the fateful hour of the night when he was to be called in to witness the love-scene.

At dead of night the girls came to call the Prince, and provoked him by saying, "Shame on the family whose ladies carry on such love-intrigues. Go now and satisfy yourself of the daily nocturnal movements of your wife, who pretends to be a great lover of the Lord and who, in spite of the repeated requests of mother, would not bow to the goddess Śakti." The Prince rushed to the temple unable to control his passion any longer and there he found Mīrā fully absorbed in making her confessions of love to her Divine Beloved and making complete surrenders. Before Mīrā could finish her sentences he broke open the door and rushed towards her; but he was completely stunned when he saw no one else but Mīrā seated in an ecstatic mood, completely unperturbed by the entrance of the intruder and absorbed in conversing with the little idol that stood before her. But the eyes of the Prince could not discern the Lord behind the mask that He wore, screened as they were by the veil of Māyā. He saw nothing else but the Idol. He caught hold of Mīrā and asked

her with whom she was conversing. Mīrā, strong in the strength of her Beloved smiled, looked up to him and said, "See for yourself." He cried, "Show me thy lover. I am athirst for his blood." Pointing to the little image in the front, she said, "There He sits; shatter Him to pieces, if you can; there is the Eternal One who has always been stealing the butter of the Gopīs in Vraja, sometimes stealing their clothes as they went down to bathe. But more than all He has stolen my heart and gives it not back. But I do not complain of it; for, therein lies my solace. See how He smiles at His mischief! No, He again assumes the old grim face. Beloved! smile once more as You smiled of yore! Ah no, He feels I have given myself up to the Prince. No dear, no. Wait. Oh wait. Why are You parting so early? Pray, wait. W.....a....i....t....W...a....i.....t. W.....a....i..... (and Mīrā fainted away)." This was a queer experience for the prince, who hurried away. The other girls who had followed him stood aghast, and began to see things in a different light altogether. It was an unusual experience to them. Ūdā ran to kiss her sister-in-law—the fainted Mīrā; but she was deterred from within; for, it was she who was partly responsible for the accusations against this goddess of piety in human form. The girls could not read the mind of the Prince as he left the place.

Henceforward the Prince felt that his wife had gone mad, and so he did not for some time trouble himself with the affair. But the world saw this through the eyes

of scandal, and rumour went round that Mīrā had started mixing freely with the Sādhus, and various were the motives assigned to the act by dame rumour. But Mīrā was careless of these ignoble talks that were the topic of the day; unaffected she would go on singing her old song:—

"Now none else but Him can I claim as my own.
I forsook my father and my mother and all those that were dear to me.
In the company of the Sādhus I sacrificed my world and my modesty.
I rushed to meet a saint when one appeared, and wept when the worldly crossed my path.
With tears I nourished the everlasting creeper of love.
In my search I met the deliverers—
*The Saint and the Holy Name.**
Thenceforward the Name within and the Saint overhead have lighted my path.
To the Lord, the servant Mīrā has consigned herself.
What cares she for the rumours that be current all round!"†

* In the Chapter on the doctrine of Śabda, this term is explained.

† मेरे तो गिरधर गोपाल दूसरो न कोई॥
माता छोडी पिता छोडे, छोडे सगा-सोई।
साधाँ सँग बैठ बैठ लोक-लाज खोई॥

She continued to mix freely with the Sādhus. The Prince, seeing her resolve as adamantine as ever, gave up his militant attitude, and got a temple especially constructed for her to carry on her devotional practices.

The news of the devotion of Mīrā for Kṛṣṇa spread far and wide, so much so that the Emperor Akabara and his chief musician Tānasena were seized with the desire of seeing the wife of the heir-apparent of Mewar, whose songs, it was rumoured, were so full of genuine devotion for the Lord that He Himself appeared. They strongly yearned to hear the songs sung by Mīrā herself. But, fearing their lives were not secure in case they went in state, they disguised themselves as mendicants, and started incognito for Chitor. After a long journey, at last, they came to the temple of Mīrā, where her Idol sat mute and glorious, and bowed before the seat where Mīrā sat in devotion before her Lord. The new arrivals were transfixed at seeing the delicate, innocent and smiling face of the child of God, which seemed to welcome the new entrants and to shower her blessings upon them. Akabara would have rushed to prostrate himself at the feet of the devotee and disclosed his disguise; but he was kept back by Tānasena, who

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संत देख दौड़ि आई, जगत देख रोई।
प्रेम आँसू डार डार अमर बेल बोई॥
मारगमें तारण मिले संत नाम दोई।
संत सदा सीसपर नाम हृदै होई॥
अब तो बात फैल गई, जानै सब कोई।
दासी मीरा लाल गिरधर होनी सो होई॥

told him it would mean death to them if strict secrecy was not maintained about their identity. The Emperor then sat silently. As the devotees sat round Mīrā, she started singing her songs. When the moment arrived, she jumped up and started her ecstatic dances. The scene was so much enlivened that for the time being everyone forgot himself and saw divine shafts of light shooting forth from the idol and encircling Mīrā in a halo. Fragrance spread throughout. Some lost their consciousness, seeing Mīrā at the height of her emotions fall flat on the ground, absorbed in divine consciousness. When Mīrā recovered and wanted to go away after the day's prayers were over, Akabara rose from his seat and, with folded hands, approached Mīrā and entreated her to accept a little present of a necklace. Mīrā refused, saying that a servant of the Lord needs nothing and asks from nobody except the Lord Himself. But the Emperor humbly insisted, saying that it was an offering made at the lotus feet of the Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose image stood before him, and that she should not refuse it. The name of Kṛṣṇa—this was the strongest and the weakest point in Mīrā—made her thoughtful. When the thing came in the name of the Lord, she could say nothing but accept it. The necklace therefore lay at the feet of the idol. The Emperor, however, left the place with a heavy heart, steeped in reverence and love for the Lord. It was a great experience for the Emperor, and such occurrences were responsible for the tolerant nature and liberal views of

the great Moghul. He was a great success in uniting the various factions; but, whatever the theologians may say, he failed in the domain of religion and spirituality. The reason is clear. He sought to reap by the sickle of knowledge the fruits of Devotion and wanted to experience with his intellect the divine thrills which are the very life of a lover of God. No such experiences and interpretations could lighten his path. He remained the Emperor, no doubt, of the green fertile fields of India, that yielded fodder to the animals and nurtured the drosser element in man, the body. He could not reign over the human heart; for its king sits on a subtler seat and obtains that position as the result of a different kind of training, which is the outcome of years of penance,— not the penance of body but that of desires. When humility becomes enthroned in the heart, then alone the goal is reached.

When the news spread that the strangers of yesterday were the Emperor Akabara and his musician, Tānasena, and that the Emperor touched the feet of the blessed Mīrā, Prince Bhojarāja could not restrain himself any longer. Burning with anger, the words shot forth from his mouth like fire : "Could a Muslim dare approach a Rājapūta lady, even to make an offering and leave the soil of Rājapūtānā safe ! Fie on Rājapūtas, who heard the news and did not take revenge !" The Rāṇā could not thenceforth tolerate her living in a separate temple. He was determined to remove her from the world. He therefore went to Mīrā and severely

reprimanded her for having permitted a Muslim to enter the temple. "Drown thyself in some river", he exclaimed, "and henceforth never show thy face to the world. Thou hast brought the greatest blot on the fair name of Rājapūtānā by allowing a Moghul to touch thy feet. Thou canst not deny the truth of it; for lo! there is the proof of it—the necklace."

Sufficient for the day was the tragedy thereof. The mischief was done. Rajasthan was to lose her glory for ever. The only divine being in it started on her pilgrimage of Love to the distant regions where diviner elements reigned, and for which holy mission the Creator had sent her a messenger. With the mandate of her lord she started, like a pilgrim bound on the errand of Love, which needed the sacrifice of her life.

CHAPTER III

ON THE ERRAND OF LOVE

SHROUDED in melancholy that day, the devotees watched with anxious eyes the parting of their beloved,—the soul that gave them joy and blessed them with the sight of the Lord,—now going with a divine message to meet the Lord from whom she had been living apart for so long. Born in the race of the Rājapūtas, whose women boasted of the custom of 'Jauhara' and who had for their ideal unshaken fidelity to their husbands, she showed to the world that she would stand by the behests of her husband, implicitly obeying them, however terrible the consequences might be. This she felt was the ideal of a wife in Hindu society, and she wished to be no exception to it. Prompted by the idea of obeying the mandates of the Rāṇā, whose ignorance and hauteur were responsible for such a hasty and foolish order, the servant—for, so does every Hindu wife delight to call herself—made her way towards the river, which was to become holy by the last embraces of the Lord's devotee who had come to offer her holy frame to it. And, as she started on the pilgrimage, she bent low to her cherished idol, pressed it to her bosom, then individually caressed her

companions, that had shared the joys and pangs of the nightlong vigils, waiting for the coming of the Divine Bridegroom, and borne ungrudgingly the ridicule of their masters. For the last time she sang those beautiful songs that had brought solace to many a bruised soul and pacified many a broken heart—the very songs that have been sung by many a pilgrim on the path that leads Home. The meeting over, the farewell approached, after which the pilgrim started. This time the beloved idol lay not in a temple made of brick and clay, not within the structure that could be the boast of human agency, but in the temple of the heart, on a safe pedestal which the great Architect had prepared for Himself. Thus she started, with all her thoughts fixed on one object, that object being none else than the Lord Himself.

Today the world's scaffold was again to be smeared by the sacred blood of the great devotee of the Lord. The martyr's tomb was again to be erected on the soil of this ungrateful world. The world's ingratitude was again to be painted on the canvas of the Universe. The lessons of their forefathers' sins were again to be taught to their descendants. Her tormentors—the blind knaves—did not realize that they were in sheer ignorance perpetrating once again the heinous crime that centuries before had been enacted by their brethren on a different stage and in a different clime on the Son of God.*

* The crucifixion of Lord Christ.

The world seems to rejoice in such devilish acts of her sons. It seems to grow fat on the blood spilled of such pure souls,—else how to account for these inquisitions and tortures that mark the advent of every holy saint ! These are the murderers who wish to stifle the spirit that seeks to emerge forth from below the covers of dirt and mud that it has taken over itself by ages' sleep, by drowning itself in the quagmire of sensuality. Little do these people realize that these manifestations of divine love in Bhaktas are not the expressions of a maniac, but are the dramas enacted by His own children on the unholy stage of the earth to purge it of its sins and serve as object-lessons to the many yearning devotees that pray to the Master for help. Their acts are not the hallucinations of a madman, but they are the vital sparks of eternal flame for ever ablaze. It is a queer tragedy of human life that the two—the Lord and the Satan—should exist side by side in the same castle. But it is a stern reality. Reality must play in the lap of unreality. The servant,* however rebellious, has by years of devotion to the Lord earned for himself the boon that he should be permitted to carry on his work of mischief unbridled amongst the impostors. But when he exceeds the limits prescribed, the Lord Himself comes to the rescue.

In this burning ghat there is a temple, and therein sits my Lord. For what else should one call this world

* Satan.

where the choicest jewels in man—love, beauty, chastity, dignity and fortitude—lie smothered at the hands of these fiends in the shape of hatred, anger, desire and pride. But there is the solace that, when untold misery becomes rampant, He comes:

"Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bhārata, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth."

"For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I manifest Myself from age to age."*

The mischief of Satan is proverbial. Here it appeared in the form of wrath in the Rāṇa, who denounced the beloved Mīrā and gave her the peremptory mandate—"drown thyself in the river and never henceforth show me thy face." How patiently she bore the verdict! Fully did she follow the divine lovers' practice to show forbearance under torture for the sake of their Beloved to a degree unsurpassed in human history. Complete surrender of the body and extreme recklessness about it and laying it down at the altar of love is considered as the highest form of sacrifice in the world. But the Lord's devotee has yet a higher ideal.

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* यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे॥

(Gītā IV. 7-8)

He considers the sacrifice of the body as the lowest order of offering, the devotee can make to the Lord. The standard with which the actions of the two are to be judged is, therefore, different. In the sphere of the world it is apparent that the beloved must be convinced that the lover has genuine affection for her, while she on her part must display rank carelessness in respect of her body and abhorrence for the rules of society. If such tests are applied in the base worldly love, what finer tests must not an aspirant in the region of divine love volunteer himself for; what fiery ordeal must he not pass through; what agonies must he not patiently bear before he can cross the threshold and get entrance into the portals of that more sublime region where love reigns supreme and the pleasures of which place know no surfeiting by excess. No mathematical calculation can give its idea; no formula can explain it. From her youth Mīrā had been equipping herself for this region. She had experienced that the meeting had drawn closer; and as she wended her course towards the river, a beautiful smile played on her lips, and with the same old melody she sang old songs in her characteristic joyous tune, but this time with a greater vigour, as she was conscious that she had been freed from the physical bondage. In her ecstatic mood she would jump high in the air and cry out "Govinda, Govinda, Govinda," and sometimes

she would weep and repeat "Govinda, Govinda, Govinda." Thus she reached the river wherein she was to drown herself in compliance with her husband's wishes. There she stood on the banks of the river, a statue in meditation, resplendent in its virginity, enrapturing in its dignity and shining in its glory. All the elements seemed to stand in awe, while the bosom of the river heaved visibly, none could say why—whether in joy at the thought of her receiving a celestial being into her lap, or in sorrow at the ingratitude of the world, at its subjecting such a fair creature to physical pain. Mīrā stood in a contemplative mood, thinking of the distant regions. It was now evening and the sun shed its last rays to kiss the feet of the universal beloved and then went low, not to rise again for the day. In an instant the conch and bells started their music in the temple in the distance. At their sound Mīrā was reminded of her hour of worship. The thought of sitting for devotion irresistibly came into her mind. She looked for a seat, and at once felt that the best place was the lap of the Lord Himself. There was no time to waste. With all the vigour at her command, she prepared to jump into the river, and, as the feet were just about to leave the ground, a hand from behind grasped her. Mīrā looked behind and whom else would she see but her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who stood smiling at her in His

proverbially childish fashion. Mīrā fainted. She had found the lap of the Lord, as she had desired, wherein to pray, as the evening had approached and the hour of prayer had come.

Mīrā opened her eyes. The Lord smiled and said, "Your life with your mortal husband is over. Now you are Mine. Go now and henceforward seek Me in My kingdom—in the bowers of Vraja and in the lanes of Brindaban. A final clasp : a last embrace : now I go. Watch how I fly !"

CHAPTER IV

IN QUEST OF THE FLUTE-PLAYER

MĪRĀ started for Brindaban, singing and dancing in the way as she passed. As she crossed the burning sands of Rājapūtānā, her face did not betray any sign of physical pain or suffering. All the way nothing came to her lips but "Giradhara Gopāla : He is my all, I have no one else to call my own."*

Whoever saw her was peculiarly moved, and everybody was drawn towards her. The heart of the poor was filled with sympathy for her, and they requested her to share with them their unostentatious meals. The children took her to be their mother who had for long been away from them. She, on her part, clasped them; for she saw in them so many Kṛṣṇas. Her touch was magical, and her look captivating. Everybody wanted her blessings, and returned over-joyed after seeing her with the Lord's name on her lips. It was apparent that the Lord, taking compassion on them, had sent them His own child as the messenger to deliver them His message—the secret of divine bliss. They would not let her part. But to her the Lord's mandates were supreme and she would waste no time in answering the Divine Call. She therefore went on and on for days and nights, cheerful and unfatigued,

* मेरे तो गिरधर गोपाल दूसरो न कोई॥

till she reached the suburbs of Brindaban. There, as if by intuition, the cowherds' children recognized her, ran to her and, forgetting all decorum and decency, kissed her, raised her up and cried out, "Come, friends, she has come." They had recognized the Gopī that had been absent from Vraja for so long. She reciprocated those sentiments of love thus showered upon her; for, were they not the genuine outpourings of affection and the fragrant draughts of pastoral love? They forced her to dance, and, when they felt she must have been tired—little did they know that those feet knew no tiring—they gave her fresh milk to drink and the piece of the loaf that was lying in the cupboard. They brought her water and cleansed her feet, and in the midst of such exuberance of affection she lifted her head to see who it was that was playing those touching tunes that enraptured the heart and sent a quiver through it: and whom else would her eyes meet but the Lord Himself, seated on yonder tree, witnessing His own Līlā. As she ran to catch Him, He disappeared. Mīrā lay weeping, and the children started consoling her. After some time she recovered and started on her journey in spite of the children's vain entreaties to stay for some days more.

Her eyes could not be arrested by any other thing in the world except the purpose in hand, and that purpose was none else but the love for the Lord, and that mission no other than the journey to His abode. Thus, nothing, not even the children's entreaties,

howsoever feeling, could divert her from her purpose, which was to meet the Lord at Brindaban. At last the journey was over and she reached the place and there fell in a reverie. In her dreams she looked about herself and seemed to recognize the old place. She remembered the good old days when she had with other Gopīs played with the boy Kṛṣṇa, danced with Him and had been the butt of all His jokes. She remembered that she was Rādhā in her previous birth and had adorned the place and taught the womankind the ideal of selfless love for their consorts. She awoke from her reverie and found herself entirely amongst new surroundings. She tried to find the old places. They were all gone, and huge buildings stood in place of lovely bowers where His dramas were enacted by Lord Kṛṣṇa. She went about and rested in the temple dedicated to the Lord. As she passed through the streets, people laughed at her. Careless of the caustic remarks, she went on intuitively. As evening approached, she went out to beg for food. Having got some, she took it to the banks of the Jamunā, offered it to Lord Kṛṣṇa and partook of it. During night she sat in prayers, her little Kṛṣṇa before her, and passed hours in devotion as usual, careless of the new surroundings. To her there was nothing new. It was a return home, and not a streak of care was visible in her face. There she sat all aglow with divine fervour. She had not long to stay. Like the moths that surround the lamp, devotees began to gather about her. The news spread all round

that Mīrā had come. All seemed to recognize her. Her name seemed to be familiar to everybody. News spread far and wide that the Lord Himself visited Mīrā while she sat in devotion and danced in ecstasy. People started on the holy pilgrimage to visit her. This news also travelled to Chitor, and devotees arrived from there and begged Mīrā to return to her native place. Since her departure from there they had suffered great troubles. The Rāṇā himself realizing his folly repented, and dressed like a mendicant, came to Brindaban to seek her forgiveness. Clad in saffron, he approached Mīrā and asked her for alms.

Mīrā: What alms can you expect of a beggar !

Rāṇā: You can give me whatever I want.

Mīrā: Then ask.

At this, the Rāṇā removed his disguise, disclosed his identity and sought her forgiveness. Mīrā recognizing her husband, fell down at his feet. She acceded to his entreaties, and consented to accompany him back home.

On arrival in Chitor her time was passed in prayers in the temple. This continued for some time. Bhojarāja died while Mīrā was only twenty-three, and only ten years had elapsed after her marriage. She now felt more at liberty to carry on her devotional practices. But soon things changed, and, at the instance of his counsellors, Ratan Singh, the new Rāṇā of Mewar and Mīrā's brother-in-law, started persecuting her. Mīrā bore patiently

all the humiliations to which she was subjected, in the name of the Lord, and uttered not a word of complaint. Who could know what she was, what she wanted and what she did ! Her feelings are expressed in her own lines :—

O friend, I am mad with love: none knows my anguish.
There, on the point of the pike lies my bed, how can I sleep!
The bed of the Dear One is spread in heaven, how can I meet Him!
Only he who has a wound can understand the condition of the wounded,
Or else he who has dealt the blow.
Only a jeweller can know the secrets of a jeweller or else he who the jewel be.
Smitten with pain I roam about the forests,
Physician I have found none.
The pain of Mīrā will leave her,
*O Lord, when You play the physician.**

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* हे री मैं तो प्रेम दिवानी, मेरो दरद न जानै कोय।
सूली ऊपर सेज हमारी, किस बिध सोना होय।
गगनमँडलपर सेज पियाकी, किस बिध मिलना होय॥ १॥
घायलकी गत घायल जानै, की जिन लागी होय।
जौहरीकी गत जौहरी जानै, की जिन जौहरी होय॥ २॥
दरदकी मारी बन-बन डोलूँ, बैद मिल्यो नहीं कोय।
मीराँकी प्रभु पीर मिटै जब, बैद साँवलियो होय॥ ३॥

The persecution of Mīrā continued day and night and she was ridiculed for mixing freely with the tonsured mendicants and for dancing before the Lord's image. She was asked to give up this dancing and singing as it cast a shadow on the fair name of her family. Her characteristic reply is contained in her following lines :—

Mine is Giradhara Gopāla, none else.
He who wears the peacock crown is
Mīrā's Lord;
Father, mother, brother or kin, none
is mine,
I have flung the pride of my family:
what care I for any one!
Living in the company of saints, I
bade good-bye to the world and its
opinions,
I tore aside my veil of many hues and
bedecked myself with coarse thread;
Pearl and corals I cast aside to weave
the garland of wild flowers.
With my tears for water, I nourished
the creeper of love;

Now that the creeper has spread, the
fruit shall be joy itself.
The milk-churn I twirled with deep
emotion,
And butter I gleaned : let him who
would, have the leavings.
I was born for devotion's sake, but
the sight of the world made my heart
captive.
Mīrā is Thy maid, O Lord Giradhara;
*save me now.**

How could such a child be loved in this world!

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* मेरे तो गिरधर गोपाल, दूसरो न कोई॥
जाके सिर मोरमुकुट, मेरो पति सोई।
तात-मात, भ्रात-बंधु, आपनो न कोई॥ १॥
छाँड दई कुलकी कान, का करिहै कोई।
संतन ढिग बैठ बैठ, लोकलाज खोई॥ २॥
चुनरीके किये टूक, ओढ़ लई लोई।
मोती-मूँगे उतार, बनमाला पोई॥ ३॥
अँसुवन जल सींच-सींच, प्रेमबेल बोई।
अब तो बेल फैल गई, आनँद फल होई॥ ४॥
दूधकी मथनियाँ, बड़े प्रेमसे बिलोई।
माखन जब काढ़ लियो, छाछ पियै कोई॥ ५॥
आई मैं भगति काज, जगत देख मोही।
दासी मीराँ, गिरधर प्रभु, तारो अब मोही॥ ६॥

All sneered at her, but she did not care. Her heart aimed at pleasing one and one alone, and that was the Lord Himself.

The Rāṇā was always busy inventing a new form of torture for her. Once he sent a snake in a basket to her with a message that it contained a garland of flowers. Mīrā, after performing her ablutions, sat before it. On opening it she discovered a beautiful image of her Divine Beloved.

The Rāṇā then tried another trick. This time he sent her a cup of poison, saying it was nectar. Mīrā, after performing her prayers, raised it to her lips and quaffed the deadly liquid, which was really transformed into nectar. She has described these incidents of her life in the following beautiful song :—

Rāṇā made a present of a basket of serpent.
Mīrā performed her ablutions and put her hands in it.
Lo! it was turned into an image of the Lord.
Rāṇā sent a poisoned cup: having performed her
Prayers, Mīrā drank of it.
It had changed into nectar.
Rāṇā sent a bed of nails for Mīrā to sleep on.

Evening fell and Mīrā slept on it.
Lo! it had transformed into a bed
of roses.
Mīrā's Lord, ever beneficent, keeps her
ever out of all trouble.
Mīrā has dedicated herself to Giradhara
and roams about in ecstatic mood
*arising out of deep love.**

The mystery behind these miracles can only be explained by her love for the Lord.

Steeped in the wine of love, the lover sees nothing else but the wine all round. The whole panorama is dyed red. The very wine seems to pervade and fill the atmosphere by its fragrance. The whole consciousness is gone. Nay, the devotee himself becomes symbolic of it. Everything that he takes smells of that wine. His love is responsible for that conversion.

When she was thus tortured and troubled at her place, and when it became impossible for her to carry on her devotional practices, she sought the aid of one

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* साँप पिटारो राणा भेज्यो, मीराँ हाथ दियो जाय।
न्हाय धोय जब देखण लागी, सालगराम गई पाय॥ १॥
जहरको प्यालो राणा भेज्यो, अमरित दियो बणाय३।
न्हाय धोय जळ पीवण लागी, अमर हो गई जाय॥ २॥
सूल सेज राणाने भेजी, दीजो मीराँ सुवाय।
साँझ भई मीराँ सोवण लागी, मानो फूल बिछाय॥ ३॥
मीराँके प्रभु सदा सहाई, राखो बिघन हटाय।
भक्ति भावसे मस्त डोलती, गिरधर पै बलि जाय॥ ४॥

who could understand her condition. She addressed the following lines to a renowned contemporary saint, Tulasīdāsa :—

All the dear ones of my household
ever create trouble
Over my association with the Sādhus,
and in my devotion cause
me intense pain.
From my childhood have I made the
child Giradhara my friend.
The bonds of attachment have grown
*too strong for me now to break.**

Tulasīdāsa gauged her mental agony and physical pain and came to her rescue. He replied thus :—

Those who do not hold Rāma and
Sītā dear,
Shun them as your dire enemies,
howsoever closely related.
Prahlāda defied his father, Vibhīṣaṇa
deserted his brother and Bharata
forsook his mother.
Nay Bali disowned his preceptor
And the Gopīs left their husbands in

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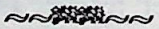
* घरके स्वजन हमारे जेते, सबन उपाधि बढ़ाई।
साधुसंग अरु भजन करत मोहि, देत कलेस अघाई॥ १॥
बालपनेसे मीराँ कीनी, गिरधरलाल मिताई।
सो तो अब छूटै नहिं क्योंहू, लगी लगन बरियाई॥ २॥

order to meet the Lord, and the behaviour of them all was a source of happiness and a blessing to the world at large.
It is in relation to God alone that all kith and kin are worthy of love.
What is the good of the eye-salve that only serves to make one blind!
Take up the hint: no more can I say.
He is in every way a noble friend, worthy of your adoration and dearer to you than your very life,
Who can generate affection for the Lord: such is the creed of Tulasīdāsa.*



* जाके प्रिय न राम बैदेही।
तजिये ताहि कोटि बैरी सम, जद्यपि परम सनेही॥
तज्यो पिता प्रहलाद, बिभीषण बंधु, भरत महतारी।
बलि गुरु तज्यो, कंत ब्रजबनितनि, भये मुद-मंगलकारी॥ १॥
नाते-नेह रामसों मनियत, सुहृद-सुसेब्य जहाँ लौं।
अंजन कहा आँखि जेहि फूटै, बहुतक कहौं कहाँ लौं॥ २॥
तुलसी सो सब भाँति परम हित, पूज्य, प्रानते प्यारो।
जाते होय सनेह रामपद, एतो मतो हमारो॥ ३॥

CHAPTER V

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE

THE wild tale of pathos shall ever remain writ large on the Temple of Love. She lived on tears and she slept on tears : this shall be the language of love in which Mīrā will go down to posterity. This child of the Lord, nursed in the best of worldly circumstances, feeling disgusted with the obstructions placed on her meeting freely her Divine Beloved, directed her course to those very regions where His kingdom lay, where the mad ravings of the world could not reach her and where the darts of Satan fell scotched like so many pieces of feather. She had started in search of a place where she could lie undisturbed in the thoughts of her Beloved. She was a child that did not look on Him with the dwarfed vision of the world's artist. While freedom was her creed and liberty her watchword, the slaves of forms, formalities and dogmas could not understand her. Her bondage lay in her love for her Beloved, and the subtle chains of love that she put on herself were not visible to many eyes. She started on her way to Brindaban. Her journey over, she found herself ushered into the region of love,

affection and beauty, where she could with freedom continue her search for the Beloved.

At Brindaban this messenger from the Lord preached the cult of Bhakti. Beautiful are the dramas she has enacted on this world's stage; lovely are the paintings she has painted on the canvas of life, and charming is the music of the poems she has given to posterity, steeped in mystic lore and perfect in their rhythm and symphony. The music of her songs thrills the heart. It is in concord with the soul. Peace dawns as if by the help of some miraculous power. To the dying and the broken heart they apply the balsam of life and give unction to the soul.

In the ruthless sea of life there are many whirlpools, through which these devotees have steered clear, unscathed, and pointed the Way. But it is not a lesson that can be learnt by rote. It is the fortunate ones alone that are afforded the opportunity to learn. By her life Mīrā showed there is no reason for an aspirant to get disheartened when she, born in a noble and conservative family, could row her boat safely through the troubled waters and conventions of the world, unchilled and unruffled by adverse winds, regardless of the sarcasms of the world, and in the teeth of mighty persecutions. Her path was the simplest and yet the most difficult, which can be followed without going to the forests or practising penances. It can be acquired in a moment, for it

comes as a gift and none can claim it as of right. An aspirant has only to find out one who knows the mystery, one who is dear to the Lord; for, he is the best interceder who can speak for us to Him. It was this search for the Master (Guru) that made her start on her errand and she was fortunate when she found her Teacher and through him the Way Home. But, before she met Raidāsa, she had to undergo painful ordeals, both external and internal, in her noble cause — love.

Who understands what is love? It is inexplicable. It can be described only by those who have had an experience of it themselves. Its signs are various and varied. It is known by its effects. A blank face and a vacant eye may be an index of the burning heart within. The attributes of Love are the same everywhere. It is a perilous position in which the lover places himself, but one which he will not willingly give up at any cost. It is a grief in which one feels pleasure. When he recites the tale of separation, it is with a view to consoling himself. Although the sword of Māyā hangs overhead, yet he is unhurt. And where is sleep in love ! Sleep is a condition of the tired mind. None knows when the Beloved might arrive. The vigil is long continued and the effort sustained. The eyes know no fatigue. The lover looks a maniac, the result of continued wakefulness and waiting. Mīrā describes this condition thus:

(1)

O friend, all the world sleeps ; I, the separated one, sit awake.
There is one like me who, sitting in her palace of pleasure, strings together a necklace of pearl;
Of yet another I know who weaves a garland of tears.
The whole night I pass counting the stars; when shall the hour of joy arrive?
The Lord of Mīrā is Giradhara Nāgara : it is by meeting Him that from anguish I shall be relieved.

(2)

Mine eyes ache for a sight of Thee;
Since Thou hast left me, my Lord, never have I found rest.

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(१)

मैं बिरहिन बैठी जागूँ, जगत सब सोवे री आली॥
बिरहिन बैठी रंगमहलमें मोतियनकी लड़ पोवे।
एक बिरहिन हम ऐसी देखी, अँसुवन माला पोवे॥ १॥
तारा गिन-गिन रैन बिहानी, सुखकी घड़ी कब आवे।
मीराँके प्रभु गिरधर नागर मिलके बिछुड़ न जावे॥ २॥

(२)

दरस बिन दूखन लागे नैन।
जबतें तुम बिछुरे पिव प्यारे, कबहुँ न पायो चैन॥

My bosom heaves at Thy Name,
The Name sounds so sweet.
I have fixed my sight on Thy path and
await Thy return; the night seems a
half-year.
O, to whom shall I recite the tale of the
pangs of separation!
My friend, I feel as if the saw is being
applied to my eyes.
When wilt Thou meet me, O Lord of
Mīrā, who art the bestower of joy and
allayer of pain.

(3)

Friend, I have lost my sleep.
The whole night I have passed in
waiting for the Beloved.
My comrades offered me their counsel,
but to none did my heart pay any heed;
Without a sight of Thee my heart is
restless, so stubborn is my heart.

सब्द सुनत मेरी छतियाँ काँपै, मीठे लागें बैन।
एक टकटकी पंथ निहारूँ, भई छमासी रैन॥ १॥
बिरह-बिथा कासों कहूँ सजनी, बह गई करवत नैन।
मीराँके प्रभु कब हो मिलोगे, दुखमेटन सुखदैन॥ २॥

(३)

सखी मेरी नींद नसानी हो।
पिवको पंथ निहारत सिगरी रैन बिहानी हो॥
सब सखियन मिल सीख दई, मैं एक न मानी हो।
बिन देखे कल नहीं परत, जिय ऐसी ठानी हो॥ १॥

My body is emaciated; I am without peace, and the name of THE DEAR ONE is on my lips.
The pain of separation burns my heart, yet He cares not for it.
Like the Cātaka crying out for the clouds, like the fish pining for the water, Mīrā lies restless in her separation from her Beloved—so lost to herself is she.

Such is the state of the poor troubled soul at every moment. None likes to hear even the tale of these people. Nobody has time to listen to their effusions of emotion, unless he is similarly affected. When the restless soul wanders thus, troubled by the love current, and knows no rest, the Lord Himself comes to them, listens to their tale, rubs off their tears and clasps them to His bosom. But the panting and thirst should come first, and then alone the divine support will follow. When no peace comes, the lover wanders weary and thirsty. His condition is then like that of a fish out of water.

A victim of the shafts of love, Mīrā, hungry and thirsty passed days and nights in silence, waiting and crying for the Beloved :

अंग छीन ब्याकुल भई, मुख पिव पिव बानी हो।
अंतर बेदन बिरहकी, वह पीर न जानी हो॥ २॥
ज्यों चातक घनको रटै, मछरी जिमि पानी हो।
मीराँ ब्याकुल बिरहणी, सुधबुध बिसरानी हो॥ ३॥

How could I live without Hari, O mother !
For the Dear One I have gone mad; it is
like the worm eating out the wood.

Medicines and herbs do not work on me,
it appears all madness to me.
As dwells the lotus in the waters, of
water born.
As loses the fish its life, when from
waters withdrawn.
In search of the Beloved from forest to
forest, to catch the music of the flute,
I roamed.
Mīrā, the Blessed one, her Lord
*Giradhara, the comforter, obtained.**

When this climax was reached, she found her Lord, and in the following lines expressed her condition :—

Rāma have I bought, O mother. Some
say it is in secret; some say, it is
by stealth.
No, I have taken it to the beating of
drums.

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* मैं हरि बिन क्यों जिऊँ री माई।
पिव कारण बौरी भई, जिमि काठहि घुन खाइ।
ओखद-मूल न संचरै, मोहि लाग्यो बौराइ॥
कमठ-दादुर बसत जलमें, जलहि तें उपजाइ।
मीन जलके बीछुरैं तन तलफि करि मरि जाइ॥
पिव ढूँढण बन-बन गई, कहुँ मुरली धुनि पाइ।
मीराके प्रभु लाल गिरधर मिल गये सुखदाइ॥

Some say He is black, some call Him
fair : with open eyes I have taken Him.
Some say He is light; and he is heavy,
say some.
All the ornaments of my body have I
given up even to the bracelet.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara, so it was
*ordained in the previous birth.**

Here is the secret of all religions. This is the only secret path through which one can approach Him. It is not outward show nor the following of conventional rules that can bring about this condition. The path is through love. Every moment of separation is a pang of death to the lovers. The only words that come to their lips are "Lord, I am Thine and Thou art mine." Their lives are differently led. The decorum of society does not bind them. They live away from all forms

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*माई, मैं तो लियो रमैयो मोल।
कोई कहै छानै, कोई कहै चवड़ै,
लियो है बजंता ढोल।
कोई कहै कालो, कोई कहै गोरो,
लियो है मैं आँख्याँ खोल।
कोई कहै हळको, कोई कहै भारी,
लियो है तराजू तोल॥ १॥
तनका गहणा मैं सब कुछ दीनाँ,
दियो है बाजूबँद खोल।
मीराँके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
पूरब जनमको है कौल॥ २॥

and shows. The paraphernalia of priestcraft, the ceremonies in the temples and the formal prayers in the churches do not appeal to them. To all appearances they do not sit in prayers, yet not a moment passes when they are not praying to their Lord. They sing with the Sūfī :

Father, I know not how to pray, nor
can I conform to the ceremonies.
I know only this much: to bow before
Thee when Thou blessest me with
Thy vision.

Similar sentiments are embodied in what Mīrā said:—

How I yearn for a vision of Thee:
when shall I see The face?
My perplexed heart knows no peace:
meet thou soon, O friend.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara: she is
burning in separation from Him.

The condition of the devotees is the same at all times and in all climes. The agonies of the soul know no subsiding. Days and nights pass in torture. Sleep leaves the eyes and no craving is left for anything. Love for God is something different from that for human beings. The lover's passion is like thirst in its intensity. It is unique in its variety. Day and night, the flame of love burns in the hearts of the fortunate few. It smoulders in the adepts, but the spark never dies out. It seems to gain energy from within. The solace

comes in the flow of tears, and the creeper of love is nourished by the eyes. This is how the thirst is quenched. Their life is a queer paradox. They are supreme artists and very bad caricaturists. They paint things in their nudity. They belong to the Children's School of Art, all innocence and purity. They lose heart at the least obstruction. At the minutest apprehension of the removal of divine touch they run to the Lord and say, "Father, why hast Thou forsaken me?" They alone realize the value of the ethereal touch. They do not live. They linger in the world. They lead a life of supreme indifference. The knowledge of the world is not their creed and there is no fear in throwing off the shackles of forms and ceremonies. There is a rank carelessness about their actions. This is no immodesty in them, but complete surrender to the Lord. They know of only one union—that with the Lord. It is sacrilegious for them to enthrone in their heart anyone else than Giradhara, or even to think of others. Such being the devotion, they meet the Beloved with open arms. The ties of flesh stand broken. So it was with Mīrā. With the Lord alone she recognized a relationship and in Him alone she found a friend. When she saw the Lord, she cast down her looks in modesty, in humble submission, and realized how long she had strayed away from Him. Her suppressed feelings gushed forth to do homage to Him. She fell at His feet, but He raised her to His bosom. She felt peace in the arms of her Lord. With the light of fidelity and singleness of purpose clear from her eyes, she started singing to Him:—

I am true to my Lord;
Why should I feel abashed, O comrade,
now that I have danced in public.
All day I feel no hunger, nor find any
rest; at night my sleep is gone.
The secret arrow of love has pierced
my heart and passed to the other
side.
My family and kin have swarmed
round me like bees.
Mīrā is the servant of Giradhara, the
ridicule of the world has lost its sting
*for her.**

At another place she expresses this state of fearlessness in the following lines:—

In the presence of Giradhara will I dance.
Him I shall please by dancing, and
His lovers I shall solicit;
Love and affection shall be the trinkets
of my feet and Remembrance shall be
my dancing robe.
The world's regard and the family
dignity I shall all discard,

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* मैं अपने सैयाँ सँग साँची।
अब काहेकी लाज सजनी, परगट हो नाची॥
दिवस भूख नहिं चैन होय कबहूँ, नींद निसि नासी।
बेध वारको पार हो गयो, ग्यान गुन गाँसी॥ १॥
कुल कुटुंब सब ही आन बैठे, जैसे मधुमासी।
दासी मीराँ लाल गिरधर, मिटी जग हाँसी॥ २॥

And I shall go and sleep on the bed of the Beloved.
*Mīrā shall dye herself in the colour of her Hari.**

This is how Mīrā lived. All her attention was directed to pleasing her Lord. She lived in love. This everlasting spring of love gushes forth in her after years of silent waiting and devotion for the Lord. It therefore knew no drying up. Ceaselessly it gushed out. This was renunciation, the absolute denial of everything. No place was left for an alien thought in the mind. The only craving was never to part from Him; and how sweetly she cherished the new treasure, is apparent from what she says on the subject:—

O dwell in my eyes, Thou darling of Nanda !
Enchanting is Thy figure and dusky
Thy complexion and big Thy eyes;
And so beautiful looks the flute on Thy lips, its note sweet like nectar.
On Thy bosom is the Vaijayantī wreath :
There is a belt of little bells round
The waist, and the trinkets in Thy feet sound sweet.

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* श्रीगिरधर आगे नाचूँगी।
नाच नाच पिव रसिक रिझाऊँ, प्रेमी जनको जाचूँगी।
प्रेत-प्रीतके बाँध घूँघरू, सुरतकी कछनी काछूँगी॥ १॥
लोक-लाज, कुलकी मरजादा, यामें एक न राखूँगी।
पियाके पलँगा जा पौढूँगी, मीराँ हरिरँग राचूँगी॥ २॥

Thou art the giver of joys to the saints,
O Lord of Mīrā and the protector of
*Thy devotees !**

What else could Mīrā's eyes see but the Lord? She gave herself up completely to Him. This was renunciation, the abandonment of all activities and desires. This is the only channel by which men can reach Him. Renunciation is the necessary outcome of love, and love does not consist in bargaining and bartering. It does not ask for any gift or comfort in lieu thereof.

From the time the devotee sells himself to the Lord, he ceases to have anything to do with himself. All his property, wealth and pride, show and power, which he foolishly thought his, he offers to the Lord. He gives up all he has,—and, after all, what are these possessions worth, except Love ! He goes to the temple, and through the veil, seeing rays of glory shooting forth says, "Father, I have come to Thee, helpless and infirm, but with hopes fixed in Thee. In utter humility I lay myself before Thee. Do whatever Thou wishest." Volition is dead in me. I have ceased to be my old self. Nothing is mine. Everything belongs to Thee. I come, stand

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* बसो मेरे नैननमें नँदलाल।
मोहनी मूरत, साँवरी सूरत, नैना बने बिसाल।
अधर सुधारस मुरली राजत, उर बैजंती माल॥ १॥
छुद्रघंटिका कटितट सोभित, नूपुर सब्द रसाल।
मीराँ प्रभु संतन सुखदाई भगतबछल गोपाल॥ २॥

and knock at Thy door. I ask for alms. Turn away this beggar if Thou so desire: bestow on him Thy blessings if Thou so choose. Kick me if that is Thy wish. I am a sinner and have not the strength left in me to repent. Master, I beseech Thee : while the shadows lengthen and the hour comes to die, take me out of the swamps of the dirt of this world. I have nothing with which to purchase this boon. The love that I have is not the arrogant love of the world, the result of pride. It is not that which has caused so many of Thy fair children to stray away from the right path and from Thee. It is not the love for the flesh and blood, the love for the beautiful eyes or the pretty face. It is the love which is the outcome of humility. When all my companions, wealth, power and fame forsook me, and their betrayal stood personified before me, I sought the protection of Thy feet; and, in the silence of night, when everybody slept, I tossed restlessly on my bed, drenching it with tears, crying in all bitterness and asking within myself, Is this love ?

If I knew, to love was to invite pain,
I would have proclaimed by beat of
*drum let none love.**

"And, as my body has been reduced to a skeleton and the reddish glow of my cheeks has turned pale, the falling breath has entreated Death to grant but one

* जो मैं ऐसा जानती, प्रेम किये दुख होय।
नगर ढिंढोरा पीटती, प्रेम न कीजै कोय॥

boon—the sight of the Lord, the glorious vision,—before life passes away:—

O black vultures, eat away everything,
of this flesh, but discriminately,
Only leave these two eyes, for they still
hope to see the Lord.
O black vultures, pull out these eyes
as well and take them to His presence.
Only make an offering of them to Lord,
*before you devour them."**

"And this last hope has kept life enlivened. My hope has been in the distant meeting as in solitude I lay musing in divine thoughts. In that pensive mood Your Grace has been my only hope. This has been the only softening element, mellowed by the fragrant memories of the passing years, when not a tear of anger has been shed at Thy seeming indifference, not a syllable has been uttered in complaint, not a gesture of revolt displayed. The hope of the distant meeting has given me as much food as the separation itself. The painful watching of the stars in the sky and the restless tossing on the bed have for their end the gleam of the glorious future. The prop has been the divine embrace. I have tried to suppress the feelings, but the

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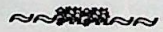
* कागा सब तन खाइयो, चुन-चुन खैयो मास।
दो नयना मत खाइयो , पिय देखन की आस॥
कागा नैन निकार के, ले जा पी के द्वार।
पहले दरस दिखाइ के, पीछे लीजो खाय॥

body has betrayed me. The eyes have told the tale in the language of tears. They have betrayed the path I was following in silence and in that I have found myself helpless. I can boast of no wealth or power or strength. I have no offering to make, yet I have started to have You. When I saw You, I said I wanted to purchase You. But for what price? I gave myself up to You—body and soul. What was this giving and what was this article purchased, few will know. Suffice it to say, You sold Yourself to me and I purchased You. It was a bargain. I became Yourself and You were idolized in me—a mighty comedy and a majestic melting away into Infinity."

Mīrā lost herself in the Lord as the colour loses itself in the water.



CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF ŚABDA

IN the beginning was the soul merged in the Lord and with the Lord. But since then aeons have passed and the soul has left its abode of peace, where it lay wrapped in bliss. The ignorance persisting for ages, and the association with the grosser elements of matter and ego have covered the subtler element to such an extent that the spirit has apparently become benumbed. In the innermost core it is still alive, but the covers that it has put on have made it insensible to the Call. It has lost its sensibilities, and has become insensate to the shafts of love. They cannot pierce the dense layers the soul has put on. But at times it so happens that, when they do pierce, the experience, howsoever shortlived gives a thrill; but this effect is soon masked by the external reactions. If this temporary selflessness is allowed to sustain itself a little longer, real love will spring forth. These temporary flashes are not of much value to a devotee, not very praiseworthy even. They cannot lead the pilgrim Home. The successful termination of the journey presumes sustained effort and consequent joy :—

During the rains, even rivulets swell
into torrents;

*'Bhakti' follows the constancy of the rivers that do not dry even in summer.**

Once this Bhakti is aroused in this frame, it begins to respond to the Eternal; the soul then starts upwards to the real home.

The soul has since its departure from the eternal Home been enjoying itself with the mind and the body.† Like the proverbial spendthrift, it is sharing with these cheats the boon of its Home. Like an ignorant child, it has fallen into bad company and is every day descending lower and lower in search of new pleasures of a vulgar type, which makes its redemption impossible. But, before the final wreck comes, it makes amends to the Father, and is forgiven. It then begins its career afresh. It only takes time to rise to the old place once more. This often happens when it is reminded in its fallen condition of its glorious past and is assured of the forgiving nature of the Father. The innate goodness is then aroused in the child. Then it realizes that these thieves—the body and the mind—which were to all appearances its companions, were really enjoying at its cost, as the soul was the only life-giving element. The covers of depravity are removed, it repents and then the Lord appears and

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* भगतिभाव भादों नदी सबै चलीं, घहराय।
सरिता सोइ सराहिये, जो जेठमास ठहराय॥
(Kabīra)

† Manas and Māyā.

makes it conscious of its fallen condition and of His mighty forgiving nature. This realization is bound to come, as the connection of the soul is yet unbroken with the Lord. When such a stage is reached, the Guru makes His appearance. The Guru knows the secrets of the Divine Path, and understands the malady of the aspirant. He ministers to the ailment of his new patient. To the aspirant he describes his fall and points out to him the path, following which he can reach Home. This path is nothing else but the current of divine love that leads the individual towards the Eternal Soul. If this route were not extant, the individual soul would never experience the thrills from the Universal. The soul, when it lay in the Ocean of Divinity, was lying silent, calm and unruffled; but, when it started its journey downward, the loss of energy in the motion resulted in its depletion, and this process of fall produced sound. This sound is technically termed Śabda in Vedānta and Yoga. At the various stages in its descent the soul adopted the form and the colour of the centre through which it passed. In our world it assumed the form of 'Manas' and 'Māyā'. If now the soul wants to return Home, it has to retrace its path; it has once more to draw together all the energy it had diffused and then to proceed backwards. Just as in the wilderness in this world the traveller is guided by the sound at a distance, so also the soul on its pilgrimage is guided by the Śabda. It is the open sesame of the Divine Home. The soul moves on and

on in reponse to it. As the sound grows clearer with the soul's advance in its upward march, the speed also increases. Like the snake that gets spell-bound itself when it hears the music of the charmer's flute, the soul drinks deep of the eternal music that issues forth from itself. This music of the soul is also called by the Yogīs as Anāhata and by the Sūfīs as Saut-i-sarmadi, the music without a beginning and an end, which never stops. When the music of this world appeals to one so much, one can easily imagine what must be the condition of the soul when it hears this divine music all the time. This music the soul has brought with itself. It sustains it. It is under its influence that the devotee goes into trances. It is the password to reach Home. Mīrā called this Śabda 'NĀMA'. Without 'Nāma', she incessantly repeated, you cannot reach Him. It is, in fact, the realization by man of his divinity. But this, she repeated, could be possible only through the help of the Teacher. And the Teacher will come only when the aspirant lies ill, crying for the beatific vision. He gives the gift of 'NĀMA', and the path becomes accessible to the recipient.

I obtained the gift of "Nāma":
The Sataguru bestowed the invaluable article,
*And by His kindness made me His own.**

* पायो जी मैं तो नाम रतन धन पायो।
बस्तु अमोलक दीनी मेरे सतगुरु, कर किरपा अपणायो॥

The love for the Guru must be unadulterated, unselfish and spontaneous. The Guru is he who will open the gate that guards the entrance to the Divine Throne. There must be implicit faith in him. Divided affection is abhorred by him. An honest heart wins him over. How tenderly Mīrā loved her Guru and with what tenacity, is depicted by her in her beautiful lines, full of pathos and music and brimming with genuine feelings of affection and respect for the Teacher:—

My mind cherishes the love of the Teacher's feet;
I like nothing but them: the world to me is but a dream.
The Ocean of metempsychosis is dried up for me : no anxiety to cross it ails me.
My Lord is Giradhara Nāgara:
*My eyes have turned inward to obtain His vision.**

How many are those honest people that have the stern faith and hope in the Teacher ? It is very nice

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* मोहे लगी लटक गुरुचरननकी।
चरन बिना मोहे कछू न भावे,
जग माया सब सपननकी॥ १॥
भवसागर सब सूख गयो है,
फिकर नहीं मोहे तरननकी।
मीराँके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
उलट भई मेरे नयननकी॥ २॥

to sit philosophizing that the world is a dream. But these are only pious thoughts. The poet is more honest (I say honest, not correct) when he says : 'Life is real' and 'not a dream'. Because he says what he sees. But the Teacher will open the devotee's eyes and show him the hypocrisy of the world and its transient nature. It will be only then that in disgust he will turn his back from the world and realize that is was a dream. This hollowness will be shown to him as a stern reality as God was shown to Vivekānanda by his Teacher, Swāmī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa, as a Being that 'stood face to face with him and conversed with him.' But one who for ages has been enjoying the wine administered by the body and the mind can seldom get out of the stereotyped rut to breathe the pure fresh air.

The soul in this world has put on covers with which it enjoys when it dives deep into the quagmire of sensuality. It is difficult for it to shake them off. It is only after removing these covers of dirt that it can follow the path of love, so difficult and narrow:—

This is the house of love, not a mere joke;
*Who removes his head and lays it on the ground shall get entrance into it.**

Let the reader judge for himself and decide how

* यह तो घर है प्रेमका, खालाका घर नाहिं।
सीस उतारै, भुइँ धरै, तब पैठे घर माहिं॥

many are prepared to follow this path with equilibrium and resolve maintained throughout. Although everyone is ready with his gospel and is up to deliver a sermon on the virtues of a devotee's life and the glories of the Path:

*Everybody praises the Path : few reach the Goal.**

yet very few find the Teacher, still less obtain his favours. On whomsoever he showers his blessings, he takes him in his company, reveals to him the secrets of the Path and leads him Home. That is the beginning of real LOVE, the love that is synonymous with the Lord. The eye sees, with its senses intact, 'camels pass through the eye of the needle' and the 'seas drown in the boat'.†

'To meet the Lord is easy, to discover His lover is difficult.' This is not a truism, but a truth. When the soul proceeds with implicit faith in the Teacher,—this automatically happens when the Teacher shows to the devotee his real form,—then it reaches Home and merges itself in divinity. Everything it sees there is its own. It dances in ecstasy when it sees its Lord. On one side stands the Teacher and on the other it witnesses the Lord in full effulgence. In a dilemma it finds itself:—

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* चलो, चलो, सब कोइ कहै, पहुँचा बिरला कोय।

† This is a miracle that the devotee sees at a particular stage in his devotion. Mind is there represented by the needle. The soul like a boat absorbs the sea, viz., the Lord.

On whose feet should I fall, now that
I see both the Lord and the Teacher
before me?
All obeisance to the Teacher, who made
*me reach the Lord !**

And it falls on the feet of its Teacher, unable to understand its own action and decision. The Lord smiles and clasps the soul to His bosom. It feels the warmth of the embrace. It revives from its slumber and tastes of the eternal life. This is life immortal which it now gets. The way is through the Teacher, who is to impart the knowledge of the Śabda. There is no other way in this Kali age. Prepare for His arrival; for, sooner or later, He is bound to come. You are to be equipped, not with the riches and the wealth of the world, but with a poor man's heart, a heart that will burst forth into tears of joy at His name and in which the waves of love are constantly rising, leaving no space for any other love besides that for the Holy One:—

Narrow is the lane of love: it cannot
contain two.
When enters the Lord, I cease to be:
where I am, the Lord enters not.†

When this stage is reached, it is the climax. It is complete absorption in Him.

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*गुरु गोबिंद दोनूँ मिले, काके लागूँ पाय।
बलिहारी गुरु आपकी, जिन गोबिंद दिया बताय॥

†जब मैं था तब हरि नहीं, अब हरि हैं, मैं नाहिं।
प्रेम-गली अति साँकरी, तामें दो न समाहिं॥

The inception of love is the result of the ascent of the accumulated energy upwards. The way upwards is through the Guru:—

Says Sahajo, even success in the world
without Guru is not possible :
Much less would the soul meet the Lord
*without the help of Guru.**

Mīrā was imbued with similar feelings. She cried, "Take the torch of 'Guru-Jñāna' and steer clear through the abysmal darkness of the world." What she said will be understood only by those who have passed through the path traversed by that great devotee. The fidelity required in this domain is too taxing, nay, boring at times, for the soul that has started suddenly and with great vigour at the very outset. It staggers at the first shock it receives, as it is yet raw—raw in the sense of lacking in the support of the Guru. But, when the Guru is met, the watchword of the soul is—"Always with the Guru." This is the sign of emancipation, and, sooner or later, every soul must crave for the divine support. Then redemption is not far off. Else, like the many, it also finds a place in some abyss. The onlookers have watched with careless eyes the wrecking of many boats, but they have never cared to diagnose the cause. The phantom of death, as the dear ones have been carried on the bier, has haunted them only for

* सहजो कारज जगतके, गुरु बिन पूरें नाहिं।
हरि तो गुरु बिन क्या मिलें, समझ देख मन माहिं॥

a moment. The realization has been short-lived. The attention is carried again to the wrangles of the world, and once again the soul is drowned in the sea of pain and pleasure, steeped in the desire of the world, in its joys and in its sorrows. The momentary flash does cross at least once everybody's life, and many a pious resolution is then arrived at, and solemn promise made thenceforth to follow a course that may lead Home. But their unstable position soon wrecks them on the rocks of worldliness. When once caught in its meshes, no amount of frowning or fawning will avail them. But even then, if he were to realize the greatness of the soul and follow its dictates to the last, there is every chance of redemption. The Teacher will give the devotee the strength to fight the blandishments and snares of Māyā and Kāla and ultimately tow his boat unperturbed through the gushing current. Few realize the boon the Teacher confers although everybody is familiar with the prevailing practice in big households. The entry there is regulated by permits. It is therefore not a matter for surprise that the divine preserves should be protected by these saints, who act as the repositories of divine secrets, mysteries and knowledge. If the Celā is ready, he whispers the password, and with its help the aspirant reaches the unexplored region.

The Guru tells how the descent began and the agonies of the soul commenced. He knows it, as he has the experience of that region. When the ingress into the region of darkness has been through doors of

pain, the way back must surely likewise be decked with wreaths of tears, not burning tears this time, but the soothing draughts that quench the thirst of the soul. Seeing the wilderness in front and the uncertainty in the result of the espoused cause, the tiro does not grip the opportunity offered to him, but allows himself to be washed with the downward current into the region of abysmal darkness. The proverbial laziness in man, coupled with his love for pleasure does not permit him to steer through and beyond the rushes of Māyā. He is afraid of being drowned and desires to come out unbruised. Thus, when a beginner finds after some time that the path is too difficult for him, he abandons it immediately. Thereupon the sparks of renunciation convert themselves into strong chains of worldliness, thus preparing the way to Hell. The solitary stars shine in the firmament of time; while some have persevered and others have sneered, the devotees have worn expectant looks. They have sat helpless and penitent, awaiting the motherly touch to come and take them up. And *the mother* has come. Their hopes have not been frustrated. The Teachers have come and opened the portals for them. There drinks the soul the nectar of bliss, unable to find words in which to express gratitude to the Teacher. In no words can it pay tribute to him, the repository of the GREAT MYSTERY, who unlocks the mysteries that lie unfathomed in the recesses of the heart.

Burning aspiration and strivings for unselfishness appeal to the Teacher most, and the language of tears

pleads with him most vigorously. As the devotee lies dumb and mute in utter dejection and looks upon him as the sole liberator of his entangled soul, he descends from the celestial heights and takes up the repentant child to his bosom and decks him with the priceless jewel of Devotion and ushers him into the Unknown region. The soul then dances in ecstasy a dance more ecstatic than the dance of Śiva. It is a state far above the comprehension of the uninitiated. It knows no modesty, and yet it can by no stretch of imagination be called immodest. There is no compulsion or restraint, yet freedom clothes itself in the bonds of self-surrender and one finds oneself totally engrossed in the one thought of Him. When the eyes of the devotee fixedly gaze at the eyes of the Lord, the mind knows then of no other thoughts but thoughts divine. When one stands stupefied, amazed and absorbed in the Lord, He in his turn comes and stands face to face. Where is the place, then, for the decorum of society? It is to the Almighty that the Teacher leads the devotee and forever ushers him into the Abode of Peace.

Who is there who has not pointed out that the only way is through devotion and not through mere learning, which is the lot of the privileged few? Let the philosopher try to circumscribe the incircumscribable by mere tenets of various schools of thought, all is bound to turn into vain efforts and is sure to elude his grasp. The science of today, boast as it might of its present-day achievements, is defective and imperfect; for, many

a theory of yesterday is being exploded to-day and those of to-day will likewise be exploded to-morrow. The castle these scientists have built for themselves has defective foundations. It may collapse any moment, however honest the savants may be in their convictions. They characterise divine problems and mystic theories as absurd, because they cannot be tested in their crucibles in the laboratory. Let them first discover the crucible of the heart, clean it with their tears, and then let the experimenter—the Teacher—try the experiment, and success is sure. Then will revelation come, and an idea of the path that these devoted few have followed will dawn upon them. Then they will realize that it was no creation of mere fancy that made the devotee mad. It was no hallucination, but a stern reality. It was actual seeing. It was actual talking. But they will find that the eye that saw it was different, the tongue that tasted it was different, the hand that touched it was different, the lips that spoke were different. All these were not the scientist's senses. They were the senses of the Bhakta, that await the revelation in the innermost recesses of the heart. They were the instruments of the soul within. Genuine Bhakti starts at this stage, when the soul retraces its path to find its mate. The fully developed (Premarūpā) Bhakti, of which here we find the shadow, is then being approached silently yet steadily by the soul. It was for this divine meeting that Mīrā at one stroke kicked off the blessings of the world and sought for higher visions. The reckless ease with which

she, the lover of God, looked at these fleeting joys sends a thrill through the body. All her thoughts were fixed in the Almighty, the beams of renunciation cast a halo all round her wherever she sat. She talked about nothing but the Lord. The conversation generally started in sighs and ended in sobs. Her heart was full with His munificence and grandeur and she could express her gratitude in no other language but the most human one, the language of tears. Her abiding faith in the Lord was a revolt against the established canons of prevalent religion, the religion of books, of ceremonies and conventions. Few understood her, not many appreciated her and still less followed her, and it was this last group that benefited the most. She was a herald of a new age—the age of Bhakti. With great force she proclaimed the message in tears. She was of the brotherhood of saints—saints like Kabīra and Sūradāsa. She was the Rādhā of her Kṛṣṇa, the Cowherd-boy of Brindaban, the Thief who stole the heart of her innocent companions—the Gopīs of Brindaban.

Her efforts were rewarded. Her mission of search was over. She had found the physician that could cure her, and the patient felt the rejuvenated life bubbling out of her :—

(1)

How I prize the thought of heavenly
bliss in my mind !

१.
मीरा मनमानी सुरत सैल असमानी।

My eyes are filled with tears as I think of my Home;
The heart is constantly aching, every moment the pain is getting more and more excruciating.
At night or in day I know no sleep, nor have I the least craving for food or drink.
Such pain dwells within me that I lie sleepless night and day.
To whom should I describe my anguish; in my pain I wander hither and thither.
I seek a physician of Those Regions: none is there to guide me;
I met my Sataguru, Saint Raidāsa, who gave me a souvenir in the shape of the Name of God.
I advanced and met my Lord, then was my pain allayed.
I threw dust on the head of the world, then did I attain to my Home.

जब जब सुरत लगी वा घरकी, पल पल नैनाँ पानी।
रात दिवस मोहे नींद न आवत, भावे अन्न न पानी॥
ऐसी पीर बिरह तन भीतर, जागत रैन बिहानी।
कासों पीर कहूँ तनकी री, पीर में भरमूँ खानी॥
खोजत फिरूँ बैद वा घरको, कोई ना करत बखानी।
रैदास संत मिले मोहे सतगुरु, दीनी सुरत सहदानी॥
मैं मिली जाय, पाए पिया अपने, तब मेरी पीर बुझानी।
मीरा खाक खलक सिर डाली, मैं अपना घर जानी॥

(2)

I stand waiting to know the Path : none knows the secret.
The Sataguru administered a medicine, every pore in my body found relief.
There is no physician like the Sataguru : you ask the Vedas and Purāṇas.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara : Dwells she for ever in the region of Immortality.

Guru Raidāsa showed her the way Home. She stuck to him and the mere thought that she was losing sight of him, would give her much pain and sorrow:—

Abandon me not, my Lord.
I am a frail woman, my Lord, and have no strength : you alone are my Saviour.
I have no qualifications, my Lord, you are competent in every way.
Where else can I go, since I am Yours?
*Mīrā lays claim to no other master, come to her, rescue this time.**

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(२)

खड़ी खड़ी रे पंथ निहारूँ, मरम न कोई जाना।
सतगुरु ओषध ऐसी दीनी, रोम रोम भयो चैना॥
सतगुरु जैसा बैद न कोई, पूछो बेद पुराना।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर, अमर लोकमें रहना॥
* छोड मत जाज्यो जी महाराज।
मैं अबला, बल नाहिं, गुसाँई! ऐ थे हो म्हारा सिरताज॥

When such is the extent of helplessness, when the devotee can rest his hope in none else, then the Sataguru appears. The great Indian epic tells us that when Draupadī saw that all her relations had forsaken her, that the point of shame had been reached and she observed no help was forthcoming, she burst into tears and turned to the Lord for rescue, and the Lord saved her honour :—

Thou art the refuge of the afflicted,
O Lord.
Thou extended the garment of
*Draupadī, to save her from dishonour.**

It was the same state of helplessness that Mīrā experienced, and she cried for help to the Lord. Mīrā knew that all the austerities and penances carried on even with the greatest piety and concentration could not arouse Bhakti. The path of Bhakti was different, and that was through the personal touch of the Lord's representative on earth, the intermediary between him and the Lord, the Teacher, and Raidāsa in the case of Mīrā. When her call was heard, she rejoiced and turned fearless and revelled in joy divine. She had found the Teacher :—

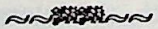
मैं गुणहीन, गुण नाहिं, गुसाँई, थे सिमरथ, महराज॥
रावरी होयके किणरे जाऊँ, थे छो म्हारे हिवड़ेरो साज।
मीराँके प्रभु और ना कोई, राखो अबकी लाज॥

* हरि! तुम हरौ जनकी भीर।
द्रौपदीकी लाज राखी, तुम बढ़ायौ चीर॥

Neither do I recognize a father nor
a father-in-law, nor do my affections
rest in my husband;
Mīrā met her Guru Raidāsa and her
*Lord Govinda followed in the wake.**

The Lord does not permit direct meeting. The devotee must meet through his preceptor. Her call is for all times and is most emphatic :—

"Gird up your loins, ye devotees. And if this life is spent in search, continue the search in the next also. He is bound to come at the appointed time. Before that expect nothing. When he comes, the gospel of love will be propounded to you and he will interpret the mysteries of the unknown to you and usher you into the loving and enchanting presence of the Lord. Then there will be no birth and no death. It will be all eternal life. It will be your salvation."



*नहीं मैं पीहर सासरे रे, नहीं पियाजीरे पास।
मीराने गोबिंद मिलियारे, गुरु मिलिया रैदास॥

CHAPTER VII

THE WAY HOME

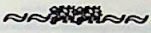
HARK ye, my friends. Silence, O my comrades. I hear the call of the Flute. I see the assembly of the saints. How He smiles as I approach Him, accompanied and guided by the Teacher. The cries of the world below do not attract me. The music of the distance enthralls my soul. I go, I go....to the been to Vraja,—to Barasānā and to Mathurā,— and she has witnessed once again the dramas that were enacted centuries ago. She has waited at Dwārakā and enjoyed the company of her Lord Giradhara. Now the night is drawing to a close. The dawn of her new life is slowly making its appearance. This dawn will sweep away the last remnants of the darkness of ignorance and usher in the sun of realization in all its glory. Mīrā must speed up. She has to perform her last rites. She has to clasp her little Image that has so often heard her supplications. She must draw near her old devotees that had wept with her as she sat reciting the tales of separation to them. They had given her hopes and soothed her in her woes of separation.

She assembles all her companions and begins her

evening prayers; and, though now quite an aged lady, yet Mīrā dances before her Lord like a child. Today she is all attention to everybody, and replies to every query. She sings as many songs as the devotees want. She is prepared to meet the Lord. All the dear devotees sit in rapt attention. Today Mīrā appears so glorious. Sometimes they see Mīrā, at other times the Lord appearing in Mīrā, a unique phenomena. They rub their eyes just to make sure if they are not dreaming, and watch closely their holy mother. They kiss her feet as she stands insensible to all that is passing round her. She sings the songs that have come down to us, and will ever arouse thrills in the body of the devotee and point to the fair haven—the realization of man's desire, the meaning of life. Hours pass like this. Mīrā is in ecstasy. All round is suddenly lit up with a halo. The Lord appears—the little image opens, and cheerfully Mīrā enters it, meets her Lord, and her human form forever disappears from before the eyes of the devotees. The Mīrā who gave the message of Bhakti forever disappears. Her message is simple. "None by reason of birth, poverty, age or sex will be debarred from His divine presence. The way is but one,—that of Bhakti. The portals will open when the Teacher will bless the devotee with his company and teach him the mysteries of the Śabda. Once He is reached, there is no further or future separation possible. Sooner or later everyone is to meet his Lord. Time is a great factor,

and can be shortened by the intensity of one's affection for the Lord. Burn in the fire of separation from the Lord. But this is to come through practice of no Yogic exercises nor through mere learning. It is a gift and a boon from the Lord Himself." In fact, when once the Lord manifests Himself to the devotee, the Call becomes irresistible and the urge can no longer be held up, the devotee cannot contain himself. He proclaims with the mystic :—

"I go with a perpetual heartache. None can see God or Goddess and live."*



* From Coventry Patmore.

SONGS OF MĪRĀ BĀĪ

(१)

प्यारे दरसन दीज्यो आय,
तुम बिनु रह्यो न जाय॥
जळ बिन कमल चंद बिन रजनी,
ऐसे तुम देख्याँ बिन सजनी।
आकुळ ब्याकुळ फिरूँ रैन दिन,
बिरह कलेजो खाय॥
दिवस न भूख नींद नहिं रैना,
मुखसे कथत न आवै बैना।
कहा कहूँ कछु कहत न आवै,
मिलकर तपत बुझाय॥
क्यूँ तरसावो अन्तरजामी,
आय मिलो किरपा कर स्वामी।
मीरा दासी जनम जनमकी,
पड़ी तुम्हारे पाय॥

(1)

Dear One come and bestow Thy vision on me.

Without Thee, O Love! I cannot be.
As the lotus without the water, as the night without the moon,
So do I—Thy maid, feel without Thee,
Troubled and distracted, I move about night and day long,
While the pangs of separation gnawe at the heart.

The days pass without hunger, and the nights go without sleep.

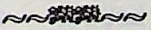
When the words do not come out of the lips;
What can I then complain about, without speech.

Except Ye, O Lord, what other hope can I cherish.

Come, soothe this burning heart.
Come, be kind and meet me, O my Master.
Mīrā, Thy maid of ages,
In supplication falls at Thy feet.

(२)

अब तो निभायाँ सरेगी,
बाँह गहेकी लाज॥
समरथ सरण तुम्हारी सइयाँ,
सरब सुधारण काज॥
भवसागर संसार अपरबल,
जामें तुम हो झयाज॥
निरधाराँ आधार जगत-गुरु,
तुम बिन होय अकाज॥
जुग जुग भीर हरी भगतनकी,
दीनी मोक्ष समाज॥
मीरा सरण गही चरणनकी,
लाज रखो महाराज॥



(३)

राम मिलण रो घणो उमावो
नित उठ जोऊँ बाटड़ियाँ।
दरस बिना मोहि कछु न सुहावै
जक न पड़त है आँखड़ियाँ॥

(2)

Now You have to protect me.
For You have accepted me as Thy bride.
The Powerful One, in You I seek my refuge,
Pray let all my works be accomplished.
Vast is the ocean of the world, beyond me to negotiate,
You alone are my ship, for me to cross o'er.
Of the supportless, You are the support, O Teacher of the World,
And without Your aid every work of the world is ill-performed.

Through ages the pain of Your devotees, O Hari, You have allayed;
And on the world You have conferred salvation;
Mīrā seeks shelter in Your lotus feet,
Protect her honour now, O Lord.

(3)

Great is my desire to meet Rāma.
In the early morn, I go out to seek Him.
Without a sight of Him nothing appeals to me.
Nor do these eyes get sleep.

तड़फत-तड़फत बहु दिन बीते
पड़ी बिरहकी फाँसड़ियाँ।
अब तो बेग दया कर प्यारा
मैं छूँ थारी दासड़ियाँ॥

नैण दुखी दरसण कूँ तरसैं
नाभि न बैठे साँसड़ियाँ।
रात दिवस हिय आरत मेरो
कब हरि राखै पासड़ियाँ॥

लगी लगन छूटणकी नाहीं
अब क्यों कीजै आँटड़ियाँ।
मीराके प्रभु कब र मिलोगे
पूरौ मनकी आसड़ियाँ॥

(४)

गळी तो चारों बंद हुई,
मैं हरिसे मिलूँ कैसे जाय।
ऊँची नीची राह लपटीली,
पाँव नहीं ठहराय।
सोच सोच पग धरूँ जतनसे,
बार बार डिग जाय॥

Ages are past undergoing the pain of separation;
While round my neck is cast the noose of separation.

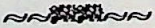
O Beloved One, be kind to me now;
I, who am your maid.

My eyes are aching for a sight of Thee,
While my breaths in regular course do not flow.

Day and night sighs rule,
When will the Beloved One come?
Now that the heart is entangled in Thee
Difficult for it is to come out.

Why then do Thou create new troubles in my Path.

When will Mīrā's Lord meet her,
To satisfy her wishes.



(4)

Blocked are all the four pathways,
How can I then meet my Hari?
Ups and downs cross this slippery Path,
On which the feet their hold cannot find.

Cautiously and thoughtfully I place my foot and proceed on.

And at every step I tremble lest I fall.

ऊँचा नीचा महल पियाका,
म्हासूँ चढ्यो न जाय।
पिया दूर पंथ म्हाँरो झीणो,
सुरत झकोळा खाय॥

कोस कोसपर पहरा बैठ्या
पैंड पैंड बटमार।
हे बिधना कैसी रच दीनी
दूर बसायो म्हाँरो गाँव॥

मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर
सतगुरु दई बताय।
जुगन जुगनसे बिछड़ी मीरा
घरमें लीनी लाय॥

(५)

माई म्हारी हरिजी न बूझी बात।
पिंड मांसूँ प्राण पापी निकस क्यूँ नहीं जात॥
पट न खोल्या मुखाँ न बोल्या साँझ भई परभात।
अबोलणा जुग बीतण लागो तो काहेकी कुसलात॥

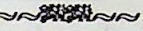
Steep and difficult is the Palace of the Dear One to climb,
Difficult for me to ascend it.
Far off dwells the Lord while my Path is narrow.
My mind all the time is swinging and dangling about.

At stages sit the sentinels in watch,
While the Path is with robbers beset;
What a difficulty have you raised,
Far off have you located my abode.
Mīrā's Lord, Giradhara Nāgara,
To her has her Sataguru pointed out.
Mīrā, for ages separated from Home,
Is brought back to it.

(5)

Dear mother, The Lord did not even care to enquire after my welfare.
Yet from this accursed body I know not why the soul does not fly off.
The eyes remained closed, nor did this tongue speak, the evening came and then the dawn.
When without the tete-a-tete ages passed, how could I then know what comfort is like.

सावण आवण होय रह्यो रे नहिं आवणकी बात।
रैण अँधेरी बीज चमंकै तारा गिणत निसि जात॥
सुपनमें हरि दरस दीन्हों मैं न जाण्यूँ हरि जात।
नैण म्हाराँ उघड़ आया रही मन पछतात॥
लेइ कटारी कंठ चीरूँ करूँगी अपघात।
मीरा व्याकुळ बिरहणी रे बाल ज्यूँ बिललात॥



(६)

घड़ी एक नहिं आवड़े, तुम दरसण बिन मोय।
तुम हो मेरे प्राण जी, कासूँ जीवण होय॥
धान न भावे नींद न आवै, बिरह सतावै मोय।
घायल-सी घूमत फिरूँ रे, मेरा दरद न जाणै कोय॥
दिवस तो खाय गमाइयो रे, रैण गमाई सोय।
प्राण गमाया झूरताँ रे, नैण गमाया रोय॥

The month of Śrāvaṇa has approached,
yet no news is heard of his approach.
While dark is the night, and shines the
lightning, the nights in counting the
stars are passed.
When the Lord Hari in my dreams
appeared, little did I know He will pass off.
As opened I my eyes, the vision gone,
how luckless I felt at last.
Taking hold of the dagger, my heart I
shall tear and I will commit suicide.
Mīrā, the restless one, lies separated,
crying as a child.

(6)

Without a sight of Thee, even a moment's
rest
I know not.
Thou meals do not appeal to me, the eyes
know no sleep, the pangs of separation
trouble.
Like the wounded one, I roam about,
none is acquainted with my pain.
The day passed in eating, the night in
sleep is o'er.
The life is gone in agony of separation,
The sight I have lost through tears.

जो मैं ऐसा जाणती रे, प्रीति कियाँ दुख होय।
नगर ढँढोराँ फेरती रे, प्रीति करो मत कोय॥
पंथ निहारूँ डगर बहारूँ, ऊभी मारग जोय।
मीराके प्रभु कब रे मिलोगे, तुम मिलियाँ सुख होय॥

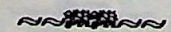
(७)

पिय बिन सूनो छै जी म्हारो देस॥
ऐसो है कोई पिवकूँ मिलावै
तन मन करूँ सब पेस।
तेरे कारण बन बन डोलूँ
कर जोगणको भेस॥
अवधि बदीती अजहुँ न आये
पंडर हो गया केस।
मीराके प्रभु कब र मिलोगे
तज दियो नगर नरेस॥

Had I known that to love was to invite pain,
To the beat of drum in the city I would
have proclaimed, let none love.
I stand waiting, watching Thy course,
cleansing Thy path,
Mīrā's Lord when will you meet her?
On meeting Thee she shall find peace.

(7)

Without the Dear One, my home is
a void,
Does there dwell some one who would take
me to my Lord?
On such a one, my body and soul I
shall bestow.
For His sake, I wander from forest to
forest,
Adopting the Yogī's dress.
The date of meeting is past, even today
you are not come.
The very hairs on my head are grown grey.
Mīrā's Lord, when will He meet her,
Now that the town of the king she has
given up?



(८)

कोइ कहियौ रे प्रभु आवनकी।
आवनकी मनभावनकी॥

आप न आवै लिख नहिं भेजै
बाण पड़ी ललचावनकी।
ए दोउ नैण कह्यो नहिं मानै
नदियाँ बहै जैसे सावनकी॥

कहा करूँ कछु नहिं बस मेरो
पाँख नहीं उड़ जावनकी।
मीरा कहै प्रभु कब र मिलोगे
चेरी भइ हूँ तेरे दाँवनकी॥

(९)

मैं जाण्यो नाहीं प्रभु मिलण कैसे होय री।
आये मेरे सजना फिर गये अँगना
मैं अभागण रही सोय री॥

(8)

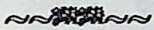
Pray, some one, convey to Him, my message to come.
The glad tidings to come, the happy news to come.
Neither comes He nor sendeth any news.
He hath acquired the habit to torment me.
Alack, howsoever I plead, these eyes care not for my reproach.
Flow they as the streams in the rains.
What can I do, it is beyond me.
The wings I do not possess, wherewith to fly o'er to Him.
Prays Mīrā, when will you meet her?
Fallen a victim is she to Thy snares.

(9)

I know not, the manner in which the Beloved to meet.
My Beloved came and from the courtyard returned.
As I, the unlucky one, lay asleep.

फारूँगी चीर करूँ गळ कंथा
रहूँगी बैरागण होय री।
चुड़ियाँ फोरूँ माँग बखेरूँ
कजरा मैं डारूँ धोय री॥

निस बासर मोहि बिरह सतावै
कल न परत पळ मोय री।
मीराके प्रभु हरि अबिनासी
मिल बिछड़ो मत कोय री॥



(१०)

बादळ देख डरी हो, स्याम! मैं बादळ देख डरी।
काळी-पीळी घटा ऊमड़ी बरस्यौ एक घरी।
जित जाऊँ तित पाणी पाणी हुई सब भूम हरी॥
जाका पिय परदेस बसत है भीजूँ बहार खरी।
मीराके प्रभु हरि अबिनासी कीजो प्रीत खरी॥

Accursed I, my garments I shall tear, and the russet don,
A mendicant shall I turn, seeking Him.
I shall the sign of my consorthood, my bangles, break, and the partings of my hair disturb.
And the collyrium of my eyes, I shall wash away.
For every moment the agony of separation troubles me,
Not for a second can I secure peace.
Of Mīrā, the Lord is the Protector,
Mind, once you meet Him, take care, you do not leave Him.

(10)

Terrified am I at the sight of the dark clouds, I am frightened seeing them.
How these black and yellow clouds rise and rain !
Whithersoever I go, the place with water is surrounded, the earth is all turned green.
She, whose Lord dwells in a foreign land, stands, wet, waiting outside for her Dear One.
Mīrā's Lord is Hari, the Indestructible, with Whom she is in genuine love.

(११)

बरसै बदरिया सावनकी,
सावनकी मनभावनकी।
सावनमें उमग्यो मेरो मनवा
भनक सुनी हरि आवनकी।
उमड़-घुमड़ चहुँदिसिसे आयो
दामण दमके झर लावनकी॥
नान्हीं-नान्हीं बूँदन मेहा बरसै
सीतल पवन सोहावनकी।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
आनंद मंगळ गावनकी॥

(१२)

सुनी हो में हरि आवनकी अवाज।
महल चढ़-चढ़ जोऊँ मेरी
सजनी! कब आवै महाराज॥
दादर मोर पपइया बोलै
कोयल मधुरे साज।
उमँग्यो इंद्र चहूँदिसि बरसै,
दामणि छोडी लाज॥
धरती रूप नवा-नवा धरिया
इंद्र मिलणकै काज।

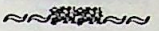
(11)

Rain the clouds in the month of Śrāvaṇa,
Ah! the clouds of Śrāvaṇa, the heart-captivating clouds !
In Śrāvaṇa my heart heaves up,
As hears it the approach of Dear Hari.
Come the clouds gathering from all sides.
Shivers the lightning heralding the approach of rain-bearing clouds.
In tiny drops falls the rain and blows the fragrant breeze, cool and pleasant.
Mīrā's Lord, Giradhara Nāgara,
The time is arrived for us to sing a glorious welcome.

(12)

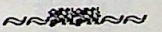
I hear the sound of the approach of Hari.
The heights I climb, O friend,
When shall the Dear One arrive.
The frog, the peacock, Papaiya,
And the Cuckoo strike melodious notes.
On all sides Indra rises, and as it rains,
The lightning gives up her modesty.
The earth has assumed ever new forms,
To meet Indra, its beloved.

मीराके प्रभु हरि अबिनासी
बेग मिलो सिरराज॥



(१३)

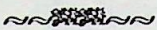
डारि गयो मनमोहन पासी।
आँबाकी डाळ कोयल इक बोलै
मेरो मरण अरु जग केरी हाँसी॥
बिरहकी मारी मैं बन-बन डोलूँ
प्राण तजूँ करवत ल्यूँ कासी।
मीराके प्रभु हरि अबिनासी
तुम मेरे ठाकुर मैं तेरी दासी॥



(१४)

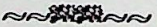
सोवत ही पलकामें मैं तो
पलक लगी पलमें पिव आये।
मैं जु उठी प्रभु आदर देण कूँ,
जाग पड़ी पिव ढूँढ न पाये॥

Mīrā's Lord is Hari, the eternal.
Pray meet her soon.



(13)

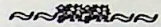
The Lord, Manamohana, had His entaglements cast.
The Cuckoo sings seated on the mango branch.
To me it means death, to the earth a mere joke.
Struck by the pangs of separation, from forest to forest I roam;
To Give up my life I retire to holy Kashi.
Mīrā's Lord is Hari, the Indestructible,
He is her Lord, and she is His maid.



(14)

On my bed as I closed my eyes in brief reverie,
Just then appeared the Beloved, in the twinkling of an eye.
And as I got up to offer my respects and cordially receive Him,
I woke up only to find that the Dear One had fled.

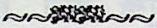
और सखी पिव सोइ गमाये
मैं जु सखी पिव जागि गमाये।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
सब सुख होय स्याम घर आये॥



(१५)

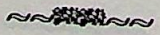
राम मिलणके काज सखी,
मेरे आरति उरमें जागी री।
तडफत-तडफत कळ न परत है,
बिरहबाण उर लागी री।
निसदिन पंथ निहारूँ पिवको,
पलक न पल भरी लागी री॥
पीव-पीव मैं रटूँ रात-दिन,
दूजी सुध-बुध भागी री।
बिरहभुजँग मेरो डस्यो है कलेजो
लहर हळाहळ जागी री॥
मेरी आरति मेटि गोसाईं,
आय मिलौ मोहि सागी री।
मीरा ब्याकुल अति उकळाणी,
पियाकी उमँग अति लागी री॥

Other friends lost Him while asleep, I lost
Him wide awake.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara,
All are happy, the Lord has returned home.



(15)

To meet the Lord, O dear friend,
The desire within my heart is invoked.
Troubled am I, no rest do I know;
The arrow of separation has pierced my
heart.
Everyday the arrival of my Lord I await.
Not for a twinkle have these eyes known
sleep.
While the name of the Beloved night and
day I repeat.
All my other pains and pleasures have left
me.
The black cobra eats my heart.
And the deadly poison hath permeated the
body.
My desire, O Lord, fulfil;
Come Thou and meet me early;
Mīrā tormented, is much troubled,
The love for the Lord is affecting her.



(१६)

तुमरे कारण सब कुछ छोड्या
अब मोहि क्यूँ तरसावौ हौ।
बिरह-बिथा लागी उर अंतर
सो तुम आय बुझावौ हौ॥
अब छोड़त नहिं बणै प्रभूजी
हँसकर तुरत बुलावौ हौ।
मीरा दासी जनम-जनमकी
अंगसे अंग लगावौ हौ॥

(१७)

करुणा सुणो स्याम मेरी।
मैं तो होय रही चेरी तेरी॥
दरसण कारण भई बावरी बिरह-बिथा तन घेरी।
तेरे कारण जोगण हूँगी दूँगी नग्र बिच फेरी॥
कुँज-बन हेरी-हेरी॥
अंग भभूत गळे मृगछाला यो तन भसम करूँरी।
अजहुँ न मिल्या राम अबिनासी बन-बन बीच फिरूँरी॥
रोऊँ नित टेरी-टेरी॥

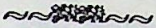
(16)

For Thy sake I gave up all comforts;
Why dost Thou now torment me?
In my heart burns now the flame of separation.
Come Thou and quench my thirst.
Now it is difficult, Thy meshes do not leave me.
Smile Thou and call me in.
Mīrā is Thy maid from age to age.
Pray, clasp her to Thy bosom.

(17)

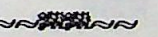
Hear Thou my plaint, O Śyāma,
I am Thy disciple.
For the sake of Thy vision, I have a mendicant turned, the pain of separation consumes me.
For Thy sake turned I a Yogī, and the town I perambulate.
The very forest and the bowers I move about;
And the body with ashes besmear, while round the neck the deerskin I put on;
and to ashes I am burning myself.
Even now Rāma, the indestructible, I have not gained,
Though wander I in the forests,
And tears I shed most bitterly.

जन मीरा कूँ गिरधर मिलिया दुख मेटण सुख भेरी।
रूम-रूम साता भइ उर में मिट गई फेराफेरी॥
रहूँ चरननि तर चेरी॥



(१८)

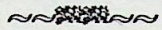
हो गये स्याम दूजके चंदा।
मधुबन जाय रहे मधुबनिया,
हमपर डारो प्रेमको फंदा।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
अब तो नेह परो कछु मंदा॥



(१९)

पपइया रे पिवकी बाणि न बोल।
सुणि पावेली बिरहणी रे थारी राळेळी पाँख मरोड़॥
चाँच कटाऊँ पपइया रे ऊपर काळो र लूण।
पिव मेरा मैं पिवकी रे तू पिव कहै स कूण॥

When met the Lord Giradhara, pain left Mīrā, all round was comfort;
Every pore of the body gained peace and came she out of the cycle of rebirths.
Turning a disciple she hath the ocean crossed.



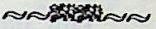
(18)

Śyāma, you have become as scarce as the new moon.
A dweller of Madhubana, once again to the Madhubana you have retired;
While round our neck you have thrown the noose of Love.
Mīrā's Lord, Giradhara Nāgara;
Seems to have cooled down in His affections.

(19)

O Papaiyā, sing not thou, the notes of the Beloved.
Only if the separated one thy laments shall overhear, the tormented one shall come and throttle thee,
And thy beak she shall cut off and put salt on the wound.
The Dear one is mine, and I am His, who art thou, to come in between.

थारा सबद सुहावणा रे जो पिव मेळा आज।
चाँच मँढाऊँ थारी सोवनी रे तू मेरे सिरताज॥
प्रीतम कूँ पतियाँ लिखूँ रे कागा तूँ ले जाय।
जाइ प्रीतमजीसूँ यूँ कहै रे थाँरि बिरहण धान न खाय॥
मीरा दासी व्याकुळी रे पिव-पिव करत बिहाय।
बेगि मिलो प्रभु अंतरजामी तुम बिन रह्यौय न जाय॥



(२०)

घर आँगण न सुहावे
पिया बिन मोहि न भावे॥
दीपक जोय कहा करूँ सजनी!
पिय परदेस रहावे।
सूनी सेज जहर ज्यूँ लागे,
सिसक-सिसक जिय जावे॥
नैण निंदरा नहिं आवे॥
कद की ऊभी मैं मग जोऊँ,
निस दिन बिरह सतावे।
कहा कहूँ कछु कहत न आवे,
हिवड़ो अति उकळावे॥
हरी कब दरस दिखावे॥

Yet sweet is thy note, and if perchance
the Beloved I meet,
I promise thee, O dear friend, thy beak
with gold I shall ornate.
Convey this message of mine, O crow,
to my Beloved;
And go tell Him, Thy dear one has
given up even her meals.
Mīrā, Thy maid, is in agony, and ever
Thy name is on her lips.
Meet Thou her soon, O Dear One,
without Thee, she cannot live.

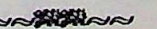
(20)

The world inside and out, nothing appeals
to me,
Without the Beloved all is so insipid.
Where then am I to go, and light the lamp,
O friend,
When dwells my Beloved in alien lands,
The vacant sleeping-couch to me looks
like a poisoned bed.
As passes my life falteringly.
To the eyes sleep doth not come.
I watch the road standing for what a
length of time,
All day and night long the pain of
separation torments me;
What can I say, when speech has left me.
My heart is grown so restless and afflicted!

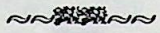
ऐसी है कोई परम सनेही,
तुरत सनेसो लावे।
वा बिरियाँ कद होसी मुझको,
हरि हँस कण्ठ लगावे॥
मीरा मिलि होरी गावे॥

(२१)

बाला मैं बैरागण हूँगी।
जिन भेषाँ म्हारो साहिब रीझे,
सोही भेष धरूँगी॥
सील सँतोष धरूँ घट भीतर,
समता पकड़ रहूँगी।
जाको नाम निरंजन कहिये,
ताको ध्यान धरूँगी॥
गुरुके ग्यान रँगूँ तन कपड़ा,
मन मुद्रा पैरूँगी।
प्रेम-पीतसू हरि-गुण गाऊँ,
चरणन लिपट रहूँगी॥
या तनकी मैं करूँ कींगरी,
रसना नाम कहूँगी।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
साधाँ संग रहूँगी॥

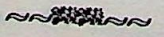


Is there some one so sympathetic,
Who would a reply to my message bring?
When will the blessed moment arrive?
When will the Lord clasp me to His bosom?
And Mīrā, dwelling in the lap of the Beloved, shall songs of Holi sing.



(21)

O my friend, I shall turn a Vairāgī.
In whatever form my Lord is pleased,
That I shall adopt.
Charity and contentment, I shall cherish within my heart,
And ever serene I shall remain.
He who is called Nirañjana,
On Him I shall meditate.
In the Teacher's knowledge I shall my clothes dye.
The mind on Him fix.
With love shall I sing songs to Him,
As I cling to the feet of the Lord.
Of this body I shall make an instrument,
On it the melodies of Thy Name I shall chant.
Mīrā's Lord Giradhara Nāgara,
With Him, I shall live night and day long.



(२२)

म्हारे जनम-मरणरा साथी थाँने नहिं बिसरूँ दिन राती।
थाँ देख्याँ बिन कल न पड़त है जाणत मेरी छाती।
ऊँची चढ़-चढ़ पंथ निहारूँ रोय-रोय अँखियाँ राती॥

यो संसार सकल जग झूठो, झूठा कुलरा न्याती।
दोउ कर जोड्याँ अरज करूँ छूँ सुण लीजो मेरी बाती॥

यो मन मेरो बड़ो हरामी ज्यों मदमातो हाथी।
सतगुर हाथ धरयो सिर ऊपर आँकुस दै समझाती॥

पल-पल पिवको रूप निहारूँ निरख-निरख सुख पाती।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर हरिचरणाँ चित राती॥

(२३)

मन रे परसि हरिके चरण।
सुभग सीतल कँवल कोमल,
त्रिबिध ज्वाला हरण।
जिण चरण प्रहलाद परसे,
इंद्र पदवी धरण॥

(22)

Thou, my companion of life and death
Thee, I cannot in life forsake.

Without a sight of Thee, I am comfortless,
Ask, and my heart shall bear me out.

Higher and higher I climb for a sight of
Thee, and the nights in tears I pass.

This world and all is an illusion and is
false, false are all relations and connections.

My hands I fold, with respects I make this
request, would that Thou could'st lend ear.

This mind is grown corrupt like the mad
elephant,
When the Teacher his hands on me placed,
This mad elephant as with the goad
pricked, went to rest.

Every moment His form I see, by its sight
peace I get.

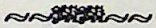
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara, in His feet
dwells her mind.

(23)

Cling thou to the feet of the Lord, O mind.
The beautiful, cool, lotus-like, delicate feet,
That quench the fire of the three worlds.

The feet which Prahalāda held,
And Indra stuck to.

जिण चरण ध्रुव अटल कीन्हें,
राख अपनी सरण।
जिण चरण ब्रह्मांड भेंट्यो,
नखसिखाँ सिरी धरण॥
जिण चरण प्रभु परसि लीने,
तरी गोतम-घरण।
जिण चरण काळीनाग नाथ्यो,
गोप-लीला-करण॥
जिण चरण गोबरधन धार्‌यो
गर्व मघवा हरण।
दासि मीरा लाल गिरधर,
अगम तारण तरण॥



(२४)

स्याम ! मने चाकर राखो जी,
गिरधारीलाल! चाकर राखो जी।
चाकर रहसूँ बाग लगासूँ, नित उठ दरसण पासूँ।
बिंद्राबनकी कुंज गलिनमें, तेरी लीला गासूँ॥

Holding which feet Dhruva became immortal,
By giving shelter to Him.
Which touching, the whole Universe was formed.

And on which the whole world depends.
With them, the wife of Gautama crossed.
With which feet Thou managed to crush Kālīnāga.

And danced to the melodies of the Gopīs.
On which feet Thou supported the Mount Govardhana.

And the vanity of Indra crushed.
Says Mīrā Thy maid,
These feet are unfathomable.

(24)

Śyāma! Take me in as Thy servant.
Giradhārī Lāla, make me Thy maid.
I shall be Thy maid, and beautiful gardens for Thee I shall grow : in lieu I shall Thy blessed visions enjoy;
In the lanes and bowers of Bindraban, Thy exploits I shall sing.

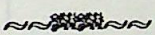
चाकरीमें दरसण पाऊँ, सुमिरण पाऊँ खरची।
भाव भगति जागीरी पाऊँ, तीनूँ बाताँ सरसी॥

मोर मुगट पीतांबर सोहै, गल बैजंती माळा।
बिंद्राबनमें धेनु चरावे, मोहन मुरलीवाळा॥

हरे हरे नित बाग लगाऊँ, बिच-बिच राखूँ क्यारी।
साँवरियाके दरसण पाऊँ, पहर कुसुम्मी सारी॥

जोगी आया जोग करण कूँ, तप करणे संन्यासी।
हरी भजनकूँ साथ आया, बिंद्राबनके बासी॥

मीराके प्रभु गहिर गँभीरा, सदा रहो जी धीरा।
आधी रात प्रभु दरसन दिन्हें, प्रेमनदीके तीरा॥



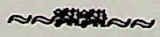
As remuneration I get Thy vision, for expenses Thy Remembrance I secure,
As Jāgīra I obtain feelings for Thee; all these three things are so nice.

The peacock-crown is on Thy head, with Pītāmbara are Thou dressed, and around Thy neck the garland of Baijantī hangs.
How Thou playst the cowherd, Thou charming
Flute-player in Bindraban, as Thou go about grazing the cows.

The green gardens I plant, with beautiful rows interspersed.
As dressed in the Kusuma Sārī of my Lord Sāvariyā,
I obtain the vision.

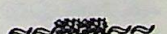
The Yogī approached me to teach Yoga, and the ascetic wanted me to learn penances.
To recite the name of Hari, came as mendicants the dwellers of Vraja.

Mīrā's Lord is deep, unfathomable, ever serene.
In the middle of night, the Lord blessed me with His vision, along the banks of the River of Love.



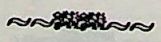
(२५)

आली! साँवरेकी दृष्टि मानो,
प्रेम की कटारी है॥
लागत बेहाल भई,
तनकी सुध-बुध गई।
तन-मन सब व्यापो प्रेम,
मानो मतवारी है॥
सखियाँ मिलि दोय-चारी,
बावरी-सी भई न्यारी।
हौं तो वाको नीके जानौं,
कुंजको बिहारी है॥
चंदको चकोर चाहै,
दीपक पतंग दाहै।
जल बिना मीन जैसे,
तैसे प्रीत प्यारी है॥
बिनती करूँ हे स्याम,
लागूँ मैं तुम्हारे पावँ।
मीरा प्रभु ऐसी जानो,
दासी तुम्हारी है॥



(25)

Believe me, friend, the glances of the Dear One,
Are like the daggers of Love,
The moment they strike, to madness I am turned.
And lost is all care for the mind and the body.
As the mind and the body, all with love is permeated.
And a mad one I turn.
Few friends who met the Beloved,
Turned they likewise mad.
I however know Him full well.
He is the Bihārī, that roams about the woods.
To the Cakora as the moon is dear, and the candle to the moth,
As the fish loves the water,
So to me is my love for the Beloved.
I pray to Thee, O dear Śyāma,
As on Your feet I fall.
Know Mīrā, O Lord,
As Thy maid.



(२६)

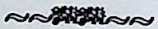
ऐसे पियै जान न दीजै, हो॥
चलो, री सखी! मिलि राखिये,
नैननि रस पीजै, हो।
स्याम सलोनो साँवरो
मुख देखत जीजै, हो॥
जोइ जोइ भेष सों हरि मिलें,
सोइ सोइ कीजै, हो।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
बड़भागन रीजै, हो॥

(२७)

मैं गिरधरके घर जाऊँ।
गिरधर म्हाँरो साँचो प्रीतम
देखत रूप लुभाऊँ॥
रैण पड़ै तबही उठि जाऊँ
भोर भये उठि आऊँ॥
रैण दिना वाके सँग खेलूँ
ज्यूँ त्यूँ ताहि रिझाऊँ॥

(26)

Let not the Dear One like this depart,
Let us go, my friends, and jointly make efforts to hold Him,
And drink the nectar of His eyes.
Of Śyāma, the Delicate One, the Blue-complexioned One,
Whose sight gives me life to live on,
With the adoption of whatsoever form the Lord I can get,
That will I follow.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara,
They who are the fortunate ones, please Him.



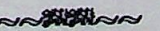
(27)

To the Abode of Giradhara I go,
For Giradhara is my true Beloved.
At whose sight I stand enthralled.
At the approach of night I go to Him; and at dawn, I start off.
Days and nights I pass in His company, playing with Him;
In a hundred ways I try to please Him.

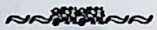
जो पहिरावै सोई पहिरूँ
जो दे सोई खाऊँ॥
मेरी उणकी प्रीत पुराणी
उण बिन पल न रहाऊँ॥
जहाँ बैठावें तितही बैठूँ
बेचै तो बिक जाऊँ॥
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर
बार बार बलि जाऊँ॥

(२८)

राम नाम रस पीजै,
मनुआँ राम नाम रस पीजै।
तज कुसंग, सतसंग बैठ नित,
हरि चरचा सुन लीजै॥
काम क्रोध मद लोभ मोह कूँ,
बहा चित्तसे दीजै।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
ताहिके रँगमें भीजै॥

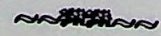


Whatever He puts on me, with it I dress on.
And I eat that which He on me bestows.
We are old friends, old is our love.
Without Him, I cannot a moment pass.
Wherever he asks me to sit, there sit I,
And if He would sell me, willingly I offer me for sale,
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara,
A hundred times my Sacrifice I pay to Him.



(28)

Drink thou, the nectar of the holy name Rāma.
O mind, drink thou the nectar of the holy name.
Abandon thou evil company, associate with the saints at all times.
And hear thou the discourses of the Lord.
From the mind turn thou all Lust, anger and passions.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara,
In His dye is she dyed.



(२९)

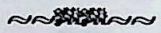
मैं गोबिंद गुण गाणा।
राजा रूठै नगरी राखै
हरि रूठ्याँ कहँ जाणा।
राणा भेज्या जहर पियाला
इमिरत करि पी जाणा॥
डबियामें भेज्या ज भुजंगम
सालिगराम कर जाणा।
मीरा तो अब प्रेम-दिवानी
साँवळिया बर पाणा॥

(३०)

या ब्रजमें कछु देख्यो री टोना॥
ले मटकी सिर चली गुजरिया
आगे मिले बाबा नंदजीके छोना।
दधिको नाम बिसरि गयो प्यारी
'ले लेहु री कोउ स्याम सलोना'॥
बिंद्राबनकी कुंज गळिनमें
आँख लगाय गयो मनमोहना।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर
सुंदर स्याम सुघर रस लोना॥

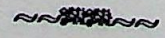
(29)

I shall recite the praises of Govinda,
The ruler if displeased, may keep his kingdom to himself;
But, if I fall into Hari's displeasure,
Where shall I go, forsaking His kingdom.
When the Rāṇā sent me the cup of poison;
I took it to be nectar and quaffed it off.
When sent the Rāṇā, in a packet a cobra,
I opened it to find the Śāligrāma.
Mīrā is now love-mad,
And hath secured the Sa̐valiyā for her consort.



(30)

A peculiar sight, O friends, I witnessed in Vraja
As went about a-selling, the Gujariya, with the curd on her head.
In the way met she the Darling of Nanda.
I tell you, forgot she the name of the curd,
And went about calling, "Who will purchase Śyāma, the Beloved."
In the lanes and bowers of Bindrābana,
Struck Mohana His glances of love.
Mīrā's Lord is Giradhara Nāgara;
The beautiful Śyāma with eyes full of love.



(३१)

भज मन चरणकँवळ अबिनासी।
जेताइ दीसे धरण गगन बिच,
तेताइ सब उठ जासी।
कहा भयो तीरथ ब्रत कीन्हे,
कहा लिये करवत कासी॥

इण देहीका गरब न करणा,
माटीमें मिल जासी।
यो संसार चहरकी बाजी,
साँझ पड़्याँ उठ जासी॥

कहा भयो है भगवा पहर्‌याँ,
घर तज भये संन्यासी।
जोगी होय जुगत नहिं जाणी,
उलट जनम फिर आसी॥

अरज करूँ अबला कर जोड़े,
स्याम तुम्हारी दासी।
मीराके प्रभु गिरधर नागर,
काटो जमकी फाँसी॥

(31)

Meditate thou, on the lotus feet of the Lord Indestructible.

All that lies in between the earth and sky,
Shall all pass away.

What availeth it to go on pilgrimages
and endure the fasts.

And what benefitteth it giving thy life at
Holy Kashi.

Be not vain of this body.

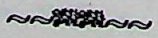
One day to dust it shall turn.

This world is a mere market-place,
That assembles, only in the evening to
pass away.

What availeth it donning the ochre dress,
And turning a mendicant, giving up the
family.

If becoming the Yogī, with the Yoga you
are not acquainted,
Of a certainty you will be reborn.
With folded hands pleads the troubled
helpless one,
Mīrā, your Maid.

Mīrā's Lord, Giradhara Nāgara,
Sever You, the bonds of Yama round
my neck.

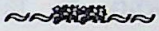


(३२)

री मेरे पार निकस गया सतगुरु मारया तीर।
बिरह भाल लगी उर अंदर ब्याकुल भया सरीर॥

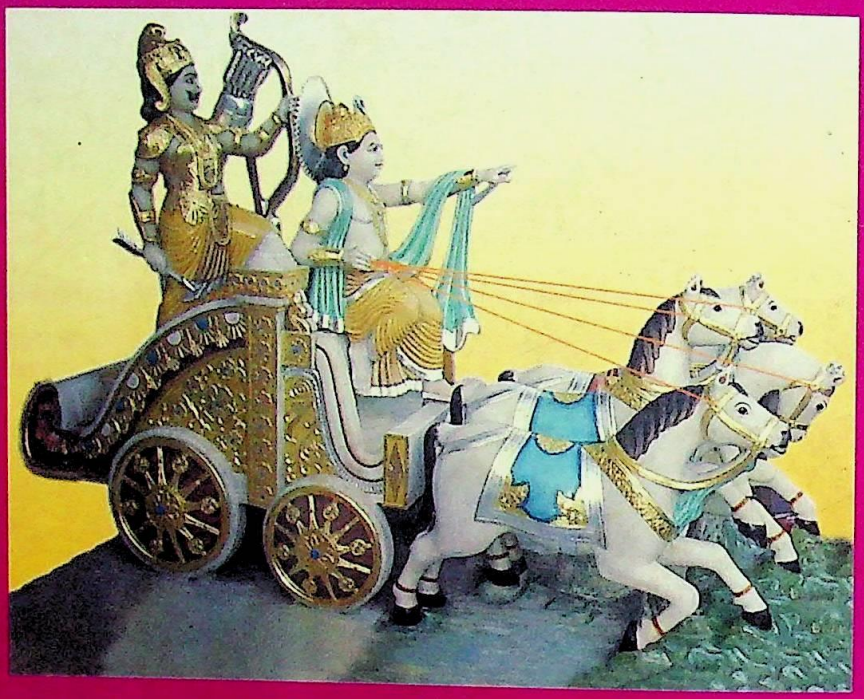
इत उत चित्त चलै नहिं कबहूँ डारी प्रेम-जँजीर।
कै जाणै मेरो प्रीतम प्यारो और न जाणै पीर॥

कहा करूँ मेरो बस नहिं सजनी नैन झरत दोउ नीर।
मीरा कहै प्रभु तुम मिलियाँ बिन प्राण धरत नहिं धीर॥



(32)

The Sataguru shot the arrow, it passed me through.
The spear of separation, found its way into my heart, the whole body is grown restless.
The mind turned stable, doth not wander hither and thither; in the noose of Love it is enchained.
Who is there who is familiar with this pain, except my Dear One?
What should I do, I am helpless, from my eyes flow the tears.
Says Mīrā, without meeting You, O Lord, my heart shall know no rest.



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